A HEAP O' LIVIN' ALONG LIFE'S HIGHWAY

Edgar A. Guest

Habitat for Humanity®

A gift from Preston Varley's Aunt Mary Varley for Esther Ellen ~~Estel~~ Schulz for her birthday (her 30th, I believe) page 28 "Home" was a favorite of my mom's!
MARGE

From Aunt Mary E Varley

Jan. 24. 1

Mrs. Preston Varley.

PART ONE

A HEAP O' LIVIN'

By

Edgar A. Guest

Verse—

The Light of Faith
A Heap o' Livin'
Just Folks
Poems of Patriotism
The Path to Home
When Day Is Done
The Passing Throng
Rhymes of Childhood
Harbor Lights of Home
The Friendly Way
Life's Highway

Illustrated—

All That Matters

Prose—

What My Religion Means to Me
Making the House a Home
My Job as a Father
Why I Go to Church
You Can't Live Your Own Life

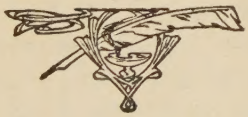
Gift Books—

Mother
Father
Home
Friends
You
Faith

A Heap o' Livin'

By

Edgar A. Guest



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FOREWORD

The blending of these two books, "A Heap o' Livin' " and "Life's Highway," into one, comes at a fitting time. It will mark the completion of twenty years of most happy association with my publishers, and for that reason I am particularly pleased by this union.

"A Heap o' Livin' " was the first book of mine to come from the press of Reilly & Lee. I never take it up without recalling that day in 1916 when I first saw those brain children of mine brought together in permanent form. That it contains many of my own favorites I think I need not take space to tell, but I should like to say that for reasons too intimate to be written, but easily guessed and understood, this particular first volume has always been first in my affections also. "Life's Highway" followed it years later. As I see these two books now brought under one cover I must confess to a glow of pride akin to that of a devoted father who lives to see two of his boys go into business together.

—EDGAR A. GUEST

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INDEX

Answering Him 126
Apple Tree, The..... 68
As Fall the Leaves..... 188
At the Door..... 132
Autumn at the Orchard..... 136

Be a Friend..... 97
Bear Story, A 134
Boy That Was, The..... 186
Breakfast Time, At..... 50
Bumps and Bruises Doctor, The..... 107

Canning Time..... 66
Can't 52
Care-Free Youth..... 78
Challenge 145
Courage 72

Defeat 111
Division 141
Dull Road, The 67
Duty 133
Duty to Our Flag, Our..... 58

Easy World, An 158
Epicure, The..... 74
Eternal Friendship 167
Expectation 176

Failures 83
Faith 168
Father 46
Father and Son 128
Fishing Cure, The..... 102
Finer Thought, The..... 164
Finest Age, The..... 76

Folks 36
Friend's Greeting, A..... 32

Gentle Gardener, The..... 75
Going Home for Christmas, On..... 24
Gratitude 179
Greatness 73
Guessing Time..... 148

Happiest Days, The..... 88
Happy Slow Thinker, The..... 103
Hard Knocks..... 43
Hard Work..... 177
Home 28
Homesick 117
Home Town, The..... 70
House-Hunting 156
How Do You Tackle Your Work?..... 62
Hunter, The..... 59

I 179
It Isn't Costly..... 14
It's September..... 60

James Whitcomb Riley..... 54
Joy of a Dog, The..... 116
June Couple, The..... 130
Junk Box, The..... 185

Laddies 48
Lady in the Electric, To the..... 122
Life 63
Life's Tests 81
Little Master Mischievous..... 38
Living Beauties, The..... 49

Ma and Her Check Book..... 100
Ma and the Auto 22

Man, A 142
Man, A Real 180
Man Who Couldn't Save, The 124
Mother 19
Mother's Day 140
Mother's Glasses 94
My Creed 15
My Paw Said So 80

Neighborly Man, The 182
No Place to Go 110

Obligation of Friendship, The 162
Old Friends 34
Only a Dad 42
Opportunity 39
Other Fellow, The 57
Out-of-Doors 104

Path That Leads to Home, The 30
Patriotic Wish, A 112
Peace 109
Peaceful Warriors, The 82
People Liked Him 152
Perfect Dinner Table, The 118
Prayer, A 121
Preparedness 85
Price of Joy, The 113
Princess Pat's, The 96
Promotion 174
Purpose 93

Raisin Pie 84
Ready Artists, The 86
Real Bait, The 90
Real Singing 106

Results and Roses 56
Revenge 173
Rich 21
Roses 184
Rough Little Rascal, The..... 13

Selfish 20
Song, A..... 33
Sorrow Tugs, The..... 40
Spring in the Trenches 44
States, The..... 160
Story Telling..... 64
Stuck 166
Success and Failure..... 77
Sugar Camp, At..... 26
Sulkers, The..... 92

Take Home a Smile..... 71
Thanksgiving 98
Things That Haven't Been Done Before... 172
Things That Make Soldier Great, The.... 114
Toast to Happiness, A..... 146
To-morrow 120
Treasures 144
True Nobility..... 91

Understanding 150
Under the Skin of Men..... 163

Vow, A..... 143

Wish, A..... 16
What a Baby Costs..... 18
When Father Shook the Stove..... 154
When Pa Comes Home..... 138
When Pa Counts..... 108
When You Know a Fellow..... 11

WHEN YOU KNOW A FELLOW

When you get to know a fellow, know his joys
and know his cares,
When you've come to understand him and the
burdens that he bears,
When you've learned the fight he's making and
the troubles in his way,
Then you find that he is different than you
thought him yesterday.
You find his faults are trivial and there's not so
much to blame
In the brother that you jeered at when you only
knew his name.

You are quick to see the blemish in the distant
neighbor's style,
You can point to all his errors and may sneer
at him the while,
And your prejudices fatten and your hates
more violent grow
As you talk about the failures of the man you
do not know,
But when drawn a little closer, and your hands
and shoulders touch,
You find the traits you hated really don't
amount to much.

When you get to know a fellow, know his every
mood and whim,
You begin to find the texture of the splendid
side of him;
You begin to understand him, and you cease to
scoff and sneer,
For with understanding always prejudices dis-
appear.
You begin to find his virtues and his faults you
cease to tell,
For you seldom hate a fellow when you know
him very well.

When next you start in sneering and your
phrases turn to blame,
Know more of him you censure than his business
and his name;
For it's likely that acquaintance would your
prejudice dispel
And you'd really come to like him if you
knew him very well.
When you get to know a fellow and you under-
stand his ways,
Then his faults won't really matter, for you'll
find a lot to praise.

THE ROUGH LITTLE RASCAL

A smudge on his nose and a smear on his cheek
And knees that might not have been washed in
a week;
A bump on his forehead, a scar on his lip,
A relic of many a tumble and trip:
A rough little, tough little rascal, but sweet,
Is he that each evening I'm eager to meet.

A brow that is beady with jewels of sweat;
A face that's as black as a visage can get;
A suit that at noon was a garment of white,
Now one that his mother declares is a fright:
A fun-loving, sun-loving rascal, and fine,
Is he that comes placing his black fist in mine.

A crop of brown hair that is tousled and tossed;
A waist from which two of the buttons are lost;
A smile that shines out through the dirt and the
grime,
And eyes that are flashing delight all the time:
All these are the joys that I'm eager to meet
And look for the moment I get to my street

IT ISN'T COSTLY

Does the grouch get richer quicker than the
friendly sort of man?
Can the grumbler labor better than the cheerful
fellow can?
Is the mean and churlish neighbor any cleverer
than the one
Who shouts a glad "good morning," and then
smiling passes on?

Just stop and think about it. Have you ever
known or seen
A mean man who succeeded, just because he
was so mean?
When you find a grouch with honors and with
money in his pouch,
You can bet he didn't win them just because
he was a grouch.

Oh, you'll not be any poorer if you smile along
your way,
And your lot will not be harder for the kindly
things you say.
Don't imagine you are wasting time for others
that you spend:
You can rise to wealth and glory and still pause
to be a friend.

MY CREED

To live as gently as I can;
To be, no matter where, a man;
To take what comes of good or ill
And cling to faith and honor still;
To do my best, and let that stand
The record of my brain and hand;
And then, should failure come to me,
Still work and hope for victory.

To have no secret place wherein
I stoop unseen to shame or sin;
To be the same when I'm alone
As when my every deed is known;
To live undaunted, unafraid
Of any step that I have made;
To be without pretense or sham
Exactly what men think I am.

To leave some simple mark behind
To keep my having lived in mind;
If enmity to aught I show,
To be an honest, generous foe,
To play my little part, nor whine
That greater honors are not mine.
This, I believe, is all I need
For my philosophy and creed.

A WISH

I'd like to be a boy again, a care-free prince of joy again,
I'd like to tread the hills and dales the way I used to do;
I'd like the tattered shirt again, the knickers thick with dirt again,
The ugly, dusty feet again that long ago I knew.
I'd like to play first base again, and Sliver's curves to face again,
I'd like to climb, the way I did, a friendly apple tree;
For, knowing what I do to-day, could I but wander back and play,
I'd get full measure of the joy that boyhood gave to me.

I'd like to be a lad again, a youngster, wild and glad again,
I'd like to sleep and eat again the way I used to do;
I'd like to race and run again, and drain from life its fun again,
And start another round of joy the moment one was through.
But care and strife have come to me, and often days are glum to me,

And sleep is not the thing it was and food
is not the same;
And I have sighed, and known that I must
journey on again to sigh,
And I have stood at envy's point and heard
the voice of shame.

I've learned that joys are fleeting things; that
parting pain each meeting brings;
That gain and loss are partners here, and so
are smiles and tears;
That only boys from day to day can drain and
fill the cup of play;
That age must mourn for what is lost
throughout the coming years.
But boys cannot appreciate their priceless joy
until too late
And those who own the charms I had will
soon be changed to men;
And then, they too will sit, as I, and backward
turn to look and sigh
And share my longing, vain, to be a care-
free boy again.

WHAT A BABY COSTS

"How much do babies cost?" said he
The other night upon my knee;
And then I said: "They cost a lot;
A lot of watching by a cot,
A lot of sleepless hours and care,
A lot of heart-ache and despair,
A lot of fear and trying dread,
And sometimes many tears are shed
In payment for our babies small,
But every one is worth it all.

"For babies people have to pay
A heavy price from day to day —
There is no way to get one cheap.
Why, sometimes when they're fast asleep
You have to get up in the night
And go and see that they're all right.
But what they cost in constant care
And worry, does not half compare
With what they bring of joy and bliss —
You'd pay much more for just a kiss.

"Who buys a baby has to pay
A portion of the bill each day;
He has to give his time and thought
Unto the little one he's bought.
He has to stand a lot of pain
Inside his heart and not complain;

And pay with lonely days and sad
For all the happy hours he's had.
All this a baby costs, and yet
His smile is worth it all, you bet."

MOTHER

Never a sigh for the cares that she bore for me,
Never a thought of the joys that flew by;
Her one regret that she couldn't do more for me,
Thoughtless and selfish, her Master was I.

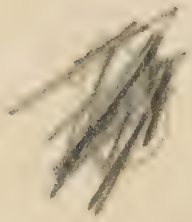
Oh, the long nights that she came at my call to me!
Oh, the soft touch of her hands on my brow!
Oh, the long years that she gave up her all to me!
Oh, how I yearn for her gentleness now!

Slave to her baby! Yes, that was the way of her,
Counting her greatest of services small;
Words cannot tell what this old heart would say of her,
Mother — the sweetest and fairest of all.

SELFISH

I am selfish in my wishin' every sort o' joy for
you;
I am selfish when I tell you that I'm wishin'
skies o' blue
Bending o'er you every minute, and a pocketful
of gold,
An' as much of love an' gladness as a human
heart can hold.
Coz I know beyond all question that if such a
thing could be
As you cornerin' life's riches you would share
'em all with me.

I am selfish in my wishin' every sorrow from
your way,
With no trouble thoughts to fret you at the
closin' o' the day;
An' it's selfishness that bids me wish you com-
forts by the score,
An' all the joys you long for, an' on top o'
them, some more;
Coz I know, old tried an' faithful, that if such
a thing could be
As you cornerin' life's riches you would share
'em all with me.



RICH

Who has a troop of romping youth
About his parlor floor,
Who nightly hears a round of cheers,
When he is at the door,
Who is attacked on every side
By eager little hands
That reach to tug his grizzled mug,
The wealth of earth commands.

Who knows the joys of girls and boys,
His lads and lassies, too,
Who's pounced upon and bounced upon
When his day's work is through,
Whose trousers know the gentle tug
Of some glad little tot,
The baby of his crew of love,
Is wealthier than a lot.

Oh, be he poor and sore distressed
And weary with the fight,
If with a whoop his healthy troop
Run, welcoming at night,
And kisses greet him at the end
Of all his toiling grim,
With what is best in life he's blest
And rich men envy him.

MA AND THE AUTO

Before we take an auto ride Pa says to Ma:
"My dear,
Now just remember I don't need suggestions
from the rear.
If you will just sit still back there and hold
in check your fright,
I'll take you where you want to go and get
you back all right.
Remember that my hearing's good and also I'm
not blind,
And I can drive this car without suggestions
from behind."

Ma promises that she'll keep still, then off we
gayly start,
But soon she notices ahead a peddler and his
cart.
"You'd better toot your horn," says she, "to let
him know we're near;
He might turn out!" and Pa replies: "Just
shriek at him, my dear."
And then he adds: "Some day, some guy will
make a lot of dough
By putting horns on tonneau seats for women-
folks to blow!"

A little farther on Ma cries: "He signaled for
a turn!"
And Pa says: "Did he?" in a tone that's hot
enough to burn.
"Oh, there's a boy on roller skates!" cries Ma.
"Now do go slow.
I'm sure he doesn't see our car." And Pa says:
"I dunno,
I think I don't need glasses yet, but really it
may be
That I am blind and cannot see what's right
in front of me."

If Pa should speed the car a bit some rigs to
hurry past
Ma whispers: "Do be careful now. You're
driving much too fast."
And all the time she's pointing out the dangers
of the street
And keeps him posted on the roads where
trolley cars he'll meet.
Last night when we got safely home, Pa sighed
and said: "My dear,
I'm sure we've all enjoyed the drive you gave
us from the rear!"

He little knew the sorrow that was in his vacant chair;
He never guessed they'd miss him, or he'd surely have been there;
He couldn't see his mother or the lump that filled her throat,
Or the tears that started falling as she read his hasty note;
And he couldn't see his father, sitting sorrowful and dumb,
Or he never would have written that he thought he couldn't come.

He little knew the gladness that his presence would have made,
And the joy it would have given, or he never would have stayed.
He didn't know how hungry had the little mother grown
Once again to see her baby and to claim him for her own.
He didn't guess the meaning of his visit Christmas Day
Or he never would have written that he couldn't get away.

He couldn't see the fading of the cheeks that once were pink,
And the silver in the tresses; and he didn't stop to think
How the years are passing swiftly, and next Christmas it might be
There would be no home to visit and no mother dear to see.
He didn't think about it — I'll not say he didn't care.
He was heedless and forgetful or he'd surely have been there.

Are you going home for Christmas? Have you written you'll be there?
Going home to kiss the mother and to show her that you care?
Going home to greet the father in a way to make him glad?
If you're not I hope there'll never come a time you'll wish you had.
Just sit down and write a letter — it will make their heart strings hum
With a tune of perfect gladness — if you'll tell them that you'll come.

AT SUGAR CAMP

At Sugar Camp the cook is kind
  And laughs the laugh we knew as boys;
And there we slip away and find
  Awaiting us the old-time joys.
The catbird calls the selfsame way
  She used to in the long ago,
And there's a chorus all the day
  Of songsters it is good to know.

The killdeer in the distance cries;
  The thrasher, in her garb of brown,
From tree to tree in gladness flies.
  Forgotten is the world's renown,
Forgotten are the years we've known;
  At Sugar Camp there are no men;
We've ceased to strive for things to own;
  We're in the woods as boys again.

Our pride is in the strength of trees,
  Our pomp the pomp of living things;
Our ears are tuned to melodies
  That every feathered songster sings.
At Sugar Camp our noonday meal
  Is eaten in the open air,
Where through the leaves the sunbeams steal
  And simple is our bill of fare.

At Sugar Camp in peace we dwell
And none is boastful of himself;
None plots to gain with shot and shell
His neighbor's bit of land or pelf.
The roar of cannon isn't heard,
There stilled is money's tempting voice;
Someone detects a new-come bird
And at her presence all rejoice.

At Sugar Camp the cook is kind;
His steak is broiling o'er the coals
And in its sputtering we find
Sweet harmony for tired souls.
There, sheltered by the friendly trees,
As boys we sit to eat our meal,
And, brothers to the birds and bees,
We hold communion with the real.

HOME

It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home,
A heap o' sun an' shadder, an' ye sometimes have t' roam
Afore ye really 'preciate the things ye lef' behind,
An' hunger fer 'em somehow, with 'em allus on yer mind.
It don't make any differunce how rich ye get t' be,
How much yer chairs an' tables cost, how great yer luxury;
It ain't home t' ye, though it be the palace of a king,
Until somehow yer soul is sort o' wrapped round everything.

Home ain't a place that gold can buy or get up in a minute;
Afore it's home there's got t' be a heap o' livin' in it;
Within the walls there's got t' be some babies born, and then
Right there ye've got t' bring 'em up t' women good, an' men;
And gradjerly, as time goes on, ye find ye wouldn't part

With anything they ever used — they've grown
into yer heart:
The old high chairs, the playthings, too, the
little shoes they wore
Ye hoard; an' if ye could ye'd keep the thumb-
marks on the door.

Ye've got t' weep t' make it home, ye've got t'
sit an' sigh
An' watch beside a loved one's bed, an' know
that Death is nigh;
An' in the stillness o' the night t' see Death's
angel come,
An' close the eyes o' her that smiled, an' leave
her sweet voice dumb.
Fer these are scenes that grip the heart, an'
when yer tears are dried,
Ye find the home is dearer than it was, an'
sanctified;
An' tuggin' at ye always are the pleasant
memories
O' her that was an' is no more — ye can't escape
from these.

Ye've got t' sing an' dance fer years, ye've got
t' romp an' play,
An' learn t' love the things ye have by usin' 'em
each day;
Even the roses 'round the porch must blossom
year by year

Afore they 'come a part o' ye, suggestin' someone dear
Who used t' love 'em long ago, an' trained 'em jes' t' run
The way they do, so's they would get the early mornin' sun;
Ye've got t' love each brick an' stone from cellar up t' dome:
It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home.

THE PATH THAT LEADS TO HOME

The little path that leads to home,
That is the road for me,
I know no finer path to roam,
With finer sights to see.
With thoroughfares the world is lined
That lead to wonders new,
But he who treads them leaves behind
The tender things and true.

Oh, north and south and east and west
The crowded roadways go,
And sweating brow and weary breast
Are all they seem to know.
And mad for pleasure some are bent,
And some are seeking fame,

And some are sick with discontent,
And some are bruised and lame.

Across the world the gleaming steel
Holds out its lure for men,
But no one finds his comfort real
Till he comes home again.
And charted lanes now line the sea
For weary hearts to roam,
But, Oh, the finest path to me
Is that which leads to home.

'Tis there I come to laughing eyes
And find a welcome true;
'Tis there all care behind me lies
And joy is ever new.
And, Oh, when every day is done
Upon that little street,
A pair of rosy youngsters run
To me with flying feet.

The world with myriad paths is lined
But one alone for me,
One little road where I may find
The charms I want to see.
Though thoroughfares majestic call
The multitude to roam,
I would not leave, to know them all,
The path that leads to home.

A FRIEND'S GREETING

I'd like to be the sort of friend that you have
been to me;
I'd like to be the help that you've been always
glad to be;
I'd like to mean as much to you each minute
of the day
As you have meant, old friend of mine, to me
along the way.

I'd like to do the big things and the splendid
things for you,
To brush the gray from out your skies and
leave them only blue;
I'd like to say the kindly things that I so oft
have heard,
And feel that I could rouse your soul the way
that mine you've stirred.

I'd like to give you back the joy that you have
given me,
Yet that were wishing you a need I hope will
never be;
I'd like to make you feel as rich as I, who
travel on
Undaunted in the darkest hours with you to
lean upon.

I'm wishing at this Christmas time that I could
but repay
A portion of the gladness that you've strewn
along my way;
And could I have one wish this year, this only
would it be:
I'd like to be the sort of friend that you have
been to me.

A SONG

None knows the day that friends must part,
None knows how near is sorrow;
If there be laughter in your heart,
Don't hold it for to-morrow.
Smile all the smiles you can to-day;
Grief waits for all along the way.

To-day is ours for joy and mirth;
We may be sad to-morrow;
Then let us sing for all we're worth,
Nor give a thought to sorrow.
None knows what lies along the way;
Let's smile what smiles we can to-day.

OLD FRIENDS

I do not say new friends are not considerate and
true,
Or that their smiles ain't genuine, but still I'm
tellin' you
That when a feller's heart is crushed and achin'
with the pain,
And teardrops come a-splashin' down his cheeks
like summer rain,
Becoz his grief an' loneliness are more than
he can bear,
Somehow it's only old friends, then, that really
seem to care.
The friends who've stuck through thick an'
thin, who've known you, good an' bad,
Your faults an' virtues, an' have seen the strug-
gles you have had,
When they come to you gentle-like an' take
your hand an' say:
"Cheer up! we're with you still," it counts, for
that's the old friends' way.

The new friends may be fond of you for what
you are to-day;
They've only known you rich, perhaps, an' only
seen you gay;
You can't tell what's attracted them; your
station may appeal;

Perhaps they smile on you because you're doin' something real;
But old friends who have seen you fail, an' also seen you win,
Who've loved you either up or down, stuck to you, thick or thin,
Who knew you as a budding youth, an' watched you start to climb,
Through weal an' woe, still friends of yours an' constant all the time,
When trouble comes an' things go wrong, I don't care what you say,
They are the friends you'll turn to, for you want the old friends' way.

The new friends may be richer, an' more stylish, too, but when
Your heart is achin' an' you think your sun won't shine again,
It's not the riches of new friends you want, it's not their style,
It's not the airs of grandeur then, it's just the old friend's smile,
The old hand that nas helped before, stretched out once more to you,
The old words ringin' in your ears, so sweet an', Oh, so true!
The tenderness of folks who know just what your sorrow means,

These are the things on which, somehow, your spirit always leans.
When grief is poundin' at your breast — the new friends disappear
An' to the old ones tried an' true, you turn for aid an' cheer.

FOLKS

We was speakin' of folks, jes' common folks,
An' we come to this conclusion,
That wherever they be, on land or sea,
They warm to a home allusion;
That under the skin an' under the hide
There's a spark that starts a-glowin'
Whenever they look at a scene or book
That something of home is showin'.

They may differ in creeds an' politics,
They may argue an' even quarrel,
But their throats grip tight, if they catch a sight
Of their favorite elm or laurel.
An' the winding lane that they used to tread
With never a care to fret 'em,
Or the pasture gate where they used to wait,
Right under the skin will get 'em.

Now folks is folks on their different ways,
With their different griefs an' pleasures,
But the home they knew, when their years were few,
Is the dearest of all their treasures.
An' the richest man to the poorest waif
Right under the skin is brother
When they stand an' sigh, with a tear-dimmed eye,
At a thought of the dear old mother.

It makes no difference where it may be,
Nor the fortunes that years may alter,
Be they simple or wise, the old home ties
Make all of 'em often falter.
Time may robe 'em in sackcloth coarse
Or garb 'em in gorgeous splendor,
But whatever their lot, they keep one spot
Down deep that is sweet an' tender.

We was speakin' of folks, jes' common folks,
An' we come to this conclusion,
That one an' all, be they great or small,
Will warm to a home allusion;
That under the skin an' the beaten hide
They're kin in a real affection
For the joys they knew, when their years were few,
An' the home of their recollection.

LITTLE MASTER MISCHIEVOUS

Little Master Mischievous, that's the name for
you;
There's no better title that describes the things
you do:
Into something all the while where you
shouldn't be,
Prying into matters that are not for you to see;
Little Master Mischievous, order's overthrown
If your mother leaves you for a minute all
alone.

Little Master Mischievous, opening every door,
Spilling books and papers round about the parlor
floor,
Scratching all the tables and marring all the
chairs,
Climbing where you shouldn't climb and tum-
bling down the stairs.
How'd you get the ink well? We can never
guess.
Now the rug is ruined; so's your little dress.

Little Master Mischievous, in the cookie jar,
Who has ever told you where the cookies are?
Now your sticky fingers smear the curtains
white;
You have finger-printed everything in sight.

There's no use in scolding; when you smile that way
You can rob of terror every word we say.

Little Master Mischievous, that's the name for you;
There's no better title that describes the things you do:
Prying into corners, peering into nooks,
Tugging table covers, tearing costly books.
Little Master Mischievous, have your roguish way;
Time, I know, will stop you, soon enough some day.

OPPORTUNITY

So long as men shall be on earth
There will be tasks for them to do,
Some way for them to show their worth;
Each day shall bring its problems new.

And men shall dream of mightier deeds
Than ever have been done before:
There always shall be human needs
For men to work and struggle for.

THE SORROW TUGS

There's a lot of joy in the smiling world, there's plenty of morning sun,
And laughter and songs and dances, too, whenever the day's work's done;
Full many an hour is a shining one, when viewed by itself apart,
But the golden threads in the warp of life are the sorrow tugs at your heart.

Oh, the fun is froth and it blows away, and many a joy's forgot,
And the pleasures come and the pleasures go, and memory holds them not;
But treasured ever you keep the pain that causes your tears to start,
For the sweetest hours are the ones that bring the sorrow tugs at your heart.

The lump in your throat and the little sigh when your baby trudged away
The very first time to the big red school — how long will their memory stay?
The fever days and the long black nights you watched as she troubled, slept,
And the joy you felt when she smiled once more — how long will that all be kept?

The glad hours live in a feeble way, but the sad
ones never die.
His first long trousers caused a pang and you
saw them with a sigh.
And the big still house when the boy and girl,
unto youth and beauty grown,
To college went; will you e'er forget that first
grim hour alone?

It seems as you look back over things, that all
that you treasure dear
Is somehow blent in a wondrous way with a
heart pang and a tear.
Though many a day is a joyous one when
viewed by itself apart,
The golden threads in the warp of life are the
sorrow tugs at your heart.

ONLY A DAD

Only a dad with a tired face,
Coming home from the daily race,
Bringing little of gold or fame
To show how well he has played the game;
But glad in his heart that his own rejoice
To see him come and to hear his voice.

Only a dad with a brood of four,
One of ten million men or more
Plodding along in the daily strife,
Bearing the whips and the scorns of life,
With never a whimper of pain or hate,
For the sake of those who at home await.

Only a dad, neither rich nor proud,
Merely one of the surging crowd,
Toiling, striving from day to day,
Facing whatever may come his way,
Silent whenever the harsh condemn,
And bearing it all for the love of them.

Only a dad but he gives his all,
To smooth the way for his children small,
Doing with courage stern and grim
The deeds that his father did for him.
This is the line that for him I pen:
Only a dad, but the best of men.

HARD KNOCKS

I'm not the man to say that failure's sweet,
Nor tell a chap to laugh when things go wrong;
I know it hurts to have to take defeat
An' no one likes to lose before a throng;
It isn't very pleasant not to win
When you have done the very best you could;
But if you're down, get up an' buckle in —
A lickin' often does a fellow good.

I've seen some chaps who never knew their power
Until somebody knocked 'em to the floor;
I've known men who discovered in an hour
A courage they had never shown before.
I've seen 'em rise from failure to the top
By doin' things they hadn't understood
Before the day disaster made 'em drop —
A lickin' often does a fellow good.

Success is not the teacher, wise an' true,
That gruff old failure is, remember that;
She's much too apt to make a fool of you,
Which isn't true of blows that knock you flat.
Hard knocks are painful things an' hard to bear,
An' most of us would dodge 'em if we could;
There's something mighty broadening in care —
A lickin' often does a fellow good.

SPRING IN THE TRENCHES

It's coming time for planting in that little patch
of ground,
Where the lad and I made merry as he followed
me around;
Now the sun is getting higher, and the skies
above are blue,
And I'm hungry for the garden, and I wish the
war was through.
But it's tramp, tramp, tramp,
And it's never look behind,
And when you see a stranger's kids
Pretend that you are blind.

The spring is coming back again, the birds
begin to mate;
The skies are full of kindness, but the world is
full of hate.
And it's I that should be bending now in peace
above the soil
With laughing eyes and little hands about to
bless the toil.
But it's fight, fight, fight,
And it's charge at double-quick;
A soldier thinking thoughts of home
Is one more soldier sick.

Last year I brought the bulbs to bloom and
saw the roses bud;
This year I'm ankle deep in mire, and most of
it is blood.
Last year the mother in the door was glad as
she could be;
To-day her heart is full of pain, and mine is
hurting me.
But it's shoot, shoot, shoot,
And when the bullets hiss,
Don't let the tears fill up your eyes,
For weeping soldiers miss.

Oh, who will tend the roses now and who will
sow the seeds?
And who will do the heavy work the little
garden needs?
And who will tell the lad of mine the things
he wants to know,
And take his hand and lead him round the
paths we used to go?
For it's charge, charge, charge,
And it's face the foe once more;
Forget the things you love the most
And keep your mind on gore.

FATHER

Used to wonder just why father
Never had much time for play,
Used to wonder why he'd rather
Work each minute of the day.
Used to wonder why he never
Loafed along the road an' shirked;
Can't recall a time whenever
Father played while others worked.

Father didn't dress in fashion,
Sort of hated clothing new;
Style with him was not a passion;
He had other things in view.
Boys are blind to much that's going
On about 'em day by day,
And I had no way of knowing
What became of father's pay.

All I knew was when I needed
Shoes I got 'em on the spot;
Everything for which I pleaded,
Somehow, father always got.
Wondered, season after season,
Why he never took a rest,
And that *I* might be the reason
Then I never even guessed.

Father set a store on knowledge;
If he'd lived to have his way
He'd have sent me off to college
And the bills been glad to pay.
That, I know, was his ambition:
Now and then he used to say
He'd have done his earthly mission
On my graduation day.

Saw his cheeks were getting paler,
Didn't understand just why;
Saw his body growing frailer,
Then at last I saw him die.
Rest had come! His tasks were ended,
Calm was written on his brow;
Father's life was big and splendid,
And I understand it now.

LADDIES

Show me the boy who never threw
A stone at someone's cat,
Or never hurled a snowball swift
At someone's high silk hat —
Who never ran away from school,
To seek the swimming hole,
Or slyly from a neighbor's yard
Green apples never stole —

Show me the boy who never broke
A pane of window glass,
Who never disobeyed the sign
That says: "Keep off the grass."
Who never did a thousand things,
That grieve us sore to tell,
And I'll show you a little boy
Who must be far from well.

THE LIVING BEAUTIES

I never knew, until they went,
How much their laughter really meant.
I never knew how much the place
Depended on each little face;
How barren home could be and drear
Without its living beauties here.

I never knew that chairs and books
Could wear such sad and solemn looks!
That rooms and halls could be at night
So still and drained of all delight.
This home is now but brick and board
Where bits of furniture are stored.

I used to think I loved each shelf
And room for what it was itself.
And once I thought each picture fine
Because I proudly called it mine.
But now I know they mean no more
Than art works hanging in a store.

Until they went away to roam
I never knew what made it home.
But I have learned that all is base,
However wonderful the place
And decked with costly treasures, rare,
Unless the living joys are there.

AT BREAKFAST TIME

My Pa he eats his breakfast in a funny sort of way:
We hardly ever see him at the first meal of the day.
Ma puts his food before him and he settles in his place
An' then he props the paper up and we can't see his face;
We hear him blow his coffee and we hear him chew his toast,
But it's for the morning paper that he seems to care the most.

Ma says that little children mighty grateful ought to be
To the folks that fixed the evening as the proper time for tea.
She says if meals were only served to people once a day,
An' that was in the morning just before Pa goes away,
We'd never know how father looked when he was in his place,
Coz he'd always have the morning paper stuck before his face.

He drinks his coffee steamin' hot, an' passes Ma his cup
To have it filled a second time, an' never once looks up.
He never has a word to say, but just sits there an' reads,
An' when she sees his hand stuck out Ma gives him what he needs.
She guesses what it is he wants, coz it's no use to ask:
Pa's got to read his paper an' sometimes that's quite a task.

One morning we had breakfast an' his features we could see,
But his face was long an' solemn an' he didn't speak to me,
An' we couldn't get him laughin' an' we couldn't make him smile,
An' he said the toast was soggy an' the coffee simply vile.
Then Ma said: "What's the matter? Why are you so cross an' glum?"
An' Pa 'most took her head off coz the paper didn't come.

CAN'T

Can't is the worst word that's written or spoken;
Doing more harm here than slander and lies;
On it is many a strong spirit broken,
And with it many a good purpose dies.
It springs from the lips of the thoughtless each morning
And robs us of courage we need through the day:
It rings in our ears like a timely-sent warning
And laughs when we falter and fall by the way.

Can't is the father of feeble endeavor,
The parent of terror and half-hearted work;
It weakens the efforts of artisans clever,
And makes of the toiler an indolent shirk.
It poisons the soul of the man with a vision,
It stifles in infancy many a plan;
It greets honest toiling with open derision
And mocks at the hopes and the dreams of a man.

Can't is a word none should speak without blushing;
To utter it should be a symbol of shame;
Ambition and courage it daily is crushing;

It blights a man's purpose and shortens his aim.
Despise it with all of your hatred of error;
Refuse it the lodgment it seeks in your brain;
Arm against it as a creature of terror,
And all that you dream of you some day shall gain.

Can't is the word that is foe to ambition,
An enemy ambushed to shatter your will;
Its prey is forever the man with a mission
And bows but to courage and patience and skill.
Hate it, with hatred that's deep and undying,
For once it is welcomed 'twill break any man;
Whatever the goal you are seeking, keep trying
And answer this demon by saying: "I *can.*"

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

Written July 22, 1916, when the world lost its "Poet of Childhood."

There must be great rejoicin' on the Golden
Shore to-day,
An' the big an' little angels must be feelin'
mighty gay:
Could we look beyond the curtain now I fancy
we should see
Old Aunt Mary waitin', smilin', for the coming
that's to be,
An' Little Orphant Annie an' the whole excited
pack
Dancin' up an' down an' shoutin': "Mr. Riley's
comin' back!"

There's a heap o' real sadness in this good old
world to-day;
There are lumpy throats this morning now that
Riley's gone away;
There's a voice now stilled forever that in
sweetness only spoke
An' whispered words of courage with a faith that
never broke.
There is much of joy and laughter that we
mortals here will lack,
But the angels must be happy now that Riley's
comin' back.

The world was gettin' dreary, there was too much sigh an' frown
In this vale o' mortal strivin', so God sent Jim Riley down,
An' He said: "Go there an' cheer 'em in your good old-fashioned way,
With your songs of tender sweetness, but don't make your plans to stay,
Coz you're needed up in Heaven. I am lendin' you to men
Just to help 'em with your music, but I'll want you back again."

An' Riley came, an' mortals heard the music of his voice
An' they caught his songs o' beauty an' they started to rejoice;
An' they leaned on him in sorrow, an' they shared with him their joys,
An' they walked with him the pathways that they knew when they were boys.
But the heavenly angels missed him, missed his tender, gentle knack
Of makin' people happy, an' they wanted Riley back.

There must be great rejoicin' on the streets of Heaven to-day
An' all the angel children must be troopin' down the way,

Singin' heavenly songs of welcome an' preparin' now to greet
The soul that God had tinctured with an everlasting sweet;
The world is robed in sadness an' is draped in sombre black;
But joy must reign in Heaven now that Riley's comin' back.

RESULTS AND ROSES

The man who wants a garden fair,
Or small or very big,
With flowers growing here and there,
Must bend his back and dig.

The things are mighty few on earth
That wishes can attain.
Whate'er we want of any worth
We've got to work to gain.

It matters not what goal you seek
Its secret here reposes:
You've got to dig from week to week
To get Results or Roses.

THE OTHER FELLOW

Are you fond of your wife and your children fair?
So is the other fellow.
Do you crave pleasures for them to share?
So does the other fellow.
Does your heart rejoice when your own are glad?
And are you troubled when they are sad?
Well, it's that way, too, in this life, my lad,
That way with the other fellow.

Do you want the best for your own to know?
So does the other fellow.
Do you stoop to kiss them before you go?
So does the other fellow.
When your baby lies on a fevered bed,
Does your heart run cold with a silent dread?
Well, it's that way, too, where all mortals tread—
That way with the other fellow.

Does it hurt when they want what you cannot buy?
It does with the other fellow.
Do you for their comfort yourself deny?
So does the other fellow.
Would you wail aloud if your babe should die
For the lack of care you could not supply?
Well, it's that way, too, as he travels by,
That way with the other fellow.

Less hate and greed
Is what we need
And more of service true;
More men to love
The flag above
And keep it first in view.

Less boast and brag
About the flag,
More faith in what it means;
More heads erect,
More self-respect,
Less talk of war machines.

The time to fight
To keep it bright
Is not along the way,
Nor 'cross the foam,
But here at home
Within ourselves — to-day.

'Tis we must love
That flag above
With all our might and main;
For from our hands,
Not distant lands,
Shall come dishonor's stain.

If that flag be
Dishonored, we
Have done it, not the foe;
If it shall fall
We first of all
Shall be to strike a blow.

THE HUNTER

Cheek that is tanned to the wind of the north,
  Body that jests at the bite of the cold,
Limbs that are eager and strong to go forth
  Into the wilds and the ways of the bold;
Red blood that pulses and throbs in the veins,
  Ears that love silences better than noise;
Strength of the forest and health of the plains:
  These the rewards that the hunter enjoys.

Forests were ever the cradles of men;
  Manhood is born of a kinship with trees.
Whence shall come brave hearts and stout muscles, when
  Woods have made way for our cities of ease?
Oh, do you wonder that stalwarts return
  Yearly to hark to the whispering oaks?
'Tis for the brave days of old that they yearn:
  These are the splendors the hunter invokes.

IT'S SEPTEMBER

It's September, and the orchards are afire with
red and gold,
And the nights with dew are heavy, and the
morning's sharp with cold;
Now the garden's at its gayest with the salvia
blazing red
And the good old-fashioned asters laughing
at us from their bed;
Once again in shoes and stockings are the chil-
dren's little feet,
And the dog now does his snoozing on the
bright side of the street.

It's September, and the cornstalks are as high
as they will go,
And the red cheeks of the apples everywhere
begin to show;
Now the supper's scarcely over ere the dark-
ness settles down
And the moon looms big and yellow at the
edges of the town;
Oh, it's good to see the children, when their
little prayers are said,
Duck beneath the patchwork covers when they
tumble into bed.

It's September, and a calmness and a sweetness
seem to fall
Over everything that's living, just as though it
hears the call
Of Old Winter, trudging slowly, with his pack
of ice and snow,
In the distance over yonder, and it somehow
seems as though
Every tiny little blossom wants to look its very
best
When the frost shall bite its petals and it droops
away to rest.

It's September! It's the fullness and the ripe-
ness of the year;
All the work of earth is finished, or the final
tasks are near,
But there is no doleful wailing; every living
thing that grows,
For the end that is approaching wears the
finest garb it knows.
And I pray that I may proudly hold my head
up high and smile
When I come to my September in the golden
afterwhile.

HOW DO YOU TACKLE YOUR WORK?

How do you tackle your work each day?
Are you scared of the job you find?
Do you grapple the task that comes your way
With a confident, easy mind?
Do you stand right up to the work ahead
Or fearfully pause to view it?
Do you start to toil with a sense of dread
Or feel that you're going to do it?

You can do as much as you think you can,
But you'll never accomplish more;
If you're afraid of yourself, young man,
There's little for you in store.
For failure comes from the inside first,
It's there if we only knew it,
And you can win, though you face the worst,
If you feel that you're going to do it.

Success! It's found in the soul of you,
And not in the realm of luck!
The world will furnish the work to do,
But you must provide the pluck.
You can do whatever you think you can,
It's all in the way you view it.
It's all in the start that you make, young man:
You must feel that you're going to do it.

How do you tackle your work each day?
With confidence clear, or dread?
What to yourself do you stop and say
When a new task lies ahead?
What is the thought that is in your mind?
Is fear ever running through it?
If so, just tackle the next you find
By thinking you're going to do it.

LIFE

Life is a gift to be used every day,
Not to be smothered and hidden away;
It isn't a thing to be stored in the chest
Where you gather your keepsakes and treasure your best;
It isn't a joy to be sipped now and then
And promptly put back in a dark place again.

Life is a gift that the humblest may boast of
And one that the humblest may well make the most of.
Get out and live it each hour of the day,
Wear it and use it as much as you may;
Don't keep it in niches and corners and grooves,
You'll find that in service its beauty improves.

STORY TELLING

Most every night when they're in bed,
And both their little prayers have said,
They shout for me to come upstairs
And tell them tales of grizzly bears,
And Indians and gypsies bold,
And eagles with the claws that hold
A baby's weight, and fairy sprites
That roam the woods on starry nights.

And I must illustrate these tales,
Must imitate the northern gales
That toss the Indian's canoe,
And show the way he paddles, too.
If in the story comes a bear,
I have to pause and sniff the air
And show the way he climbs the trees
To steal the honey from the bees.

And then I buzz like angry bees
And sting him on his nose and knees
And howl in pain, till mother cries:
"That pair will never shut their eyes,
While all that noise up there you make;
You're simply keeping them awake."
And then they whisper: "Just one more,"
And once again I'm forced to roar.

New stories every night they ask,
And that is not an easy task;
I have to be so many things,
The frog that croaks, the lark that sings,
The cunning fox, the frightened hen;
But just last night they stumped me, when
They wanted me to twist and squirm
And imitate an angle worm.

At last they tumble off to sleep,
And softly from their room I creep
And brush and comb the shock of hair
I tossed about to be a bear.
Then mother says: "Well, I should say
You're just as much a child as they."
But you can bet I'll not resign
That story telling job of mine.

CANNING TIME

There's a wondrous smell of spices
In the kitchen,
Most bewitchin';
There are fruits cut into slices
That just set the palate itchin';
There's the sound of spoon on platter
And the rattle and the clatter;
And a bunch of kids are hastin'
To the splendid joy of tastin':
It's the fragrant time of year
When fruit-cannin' days are here.

There's a good wife gayly smilin'
And perspirin'
Some, and tirin';
And while jar on jar she's pilin'
And the necks o' them she's wirin'
I'm a-sittin' here an' dreamin'
Of the kettles that are steamin',
And the cares that have been troublin'
All have vanished in the bubblin'.
I am happy that I'm here
At the cannin' time of year.

Lord, I'm sorry for the feller
That is missin'
All the hissin'
Of the juices, red and yeller,

And can never sit and listen
To the rattle and the clatter
Of the sound of spoon on platter.
I am sorry for the single,
For they miss the thrill and tingle
Of the splendid time of year
When the cannin' days are here.

THE DULL ROAD

It's the dull road that leads to the gay road;
The practice that leads to success;
The work road that leads to the play road;
It is trouble that breeds happiness.

It's the hard work and merciless grinding
That purchases glory and fame;
It's repeatedly doing, nor minding
The drudgery drear of the game.

It's the passing up glamor or pleasure
For the sake of the skill we may gain,
And in giving up comfort or leisure
For the joy that we hope to attain.

It's the hard road of trying and learning,
Of toiling, uncheered and alone,
That wins us the prizes worth earning,
And leads us to goals we would own.

THE APPLE TREE

When an apple tree is ready for the world to
come and eat,
There isn't any structure in the land that's
"got it beat."
There's nothing man has builded with the
beauty or the charm
That can touch the simple grandeur of the
monarch of the farm.
There's never any picture from a human
being's brush
That has ever caught the redness of a single
apple's blush.

When an apple tree's in blossom it is glorious
to see,
But that's just a hint, at springtime, of the
better things to be;
That is just a fairy promise from the Great
Magician's wand
Of the wonders and the splendors that are
waiting just beyond
The distant edge of summer; just a forecast
of the treat
When the apple tree is ready for the world
to come and eat.

Architects of splendid vision long have labored
on the earth,
And have raised their dreams in marble and
we've marveled at their worth;
Long the spires of costly churches have looked
upward at the sky;
Rich in promise and in the beauty, they have
cheered the passer-by.
But I'm sure there's nothing finer for the eye
of man to meet
Than an apple tree that's ready for the world
to come and eat.

There's the promise of the apples, red and
gleaming in the sun,
Like the medals worn by mortals as rewards
for labors done;
And the big arms stretched wide open, with a
welcome warm and true
In a way that sets you thinking it's intended
just for you.
There is nothing with a beauty so entrancing,
so complete,
As an apple tree that's ready for the world to
come and eat.

THE HOME-TOWN

Some folks leave home for money
And some leave home for fame,
Some seek skies always sunny,
And some depart in shame.
I care not what the reason
Men travel east or west,
Or what the month or season —
The home-town is the best.

The home-town is the glad town
Where something real abides;
'Tis not the money-mad town
That all its spirit hides.
Though strangers scoff and flout it
And even jeer its name,
It has a charm about it
No other town can claim.

The home-town skies seem bluer
Than skies that stretch away.
The home-town friends seem truer
And kinder through the day;
And whether glum or cheery
Light-hearted or depressed,
Or struggle-fit or weary,
I like the home-town best.

Let him who will, go wander
To distant towns to live,
Of some things I am fonder
Than all they have to give.
The gold of distant places
Could not repay me quite
For those familiar faces
That keep the home-town bright.

TAKE HOME A SMILE

Take home a smile; forget the petty cares,
The dull, grim grind of all the day's affairs;
The day is done, come be yourself awhile:
To-night, to those who wait, take home a smile.

Take home a smile; don't scatter grief and gloom
Where laughter and light hearts should always bloom;
What though you've traveled many a dusty mile,
Footsore and weary, still take home a smile.

Take home a smile — it is not much to do,
But much it means to them who wait for you;
You can be brave for such a little while;
The day of doubt is done — take home a smile

COURAGE

Courage isn't a brilliant dash,
A daring deed in a moment's flash;
It isn't an instantaneous thing
Born of despair with a sudden spring
It isn't a creature of flickered hope
Or the final tug at a slipping rope;
But it's something deep in the soul of man
That is working always to serve some plan.

Courage isn't the last resort
In the work of life or the game of sport;
It isn't a thing that a man can call
At some future time when he's apt to fall;
If he hasn't it now, he will have it not
When the strain is great and the pace is hot.
For who would strive for a distant goal
Must always have courage within his soul.

Courage isn't a dazzling light
That flashes and passes away from sight;
It's a slow, unwavering, ingrained trait
With the patience to work and the strength to wait.
It's part of a man when his skies are blue,
It's part of him when he has work to do.
The brave man never is freed of it.
He has it when there is no need of it.

Courage was never designed for show;
It isn't a thing that can come and go;
It's written in victory and defeat
And every trial a man may meet.
It's part of his hours, his days and his years,
Back of his smiles and behind his tears.
Courage is more than a daring deed:
It's the breath of life and a strong man's creed.

GREATNESS

We can be great by helping one another;
We can be loved for very simple deeds:
Who has the grateful mention of a brother
Has really all the honor that he needs.

We can be famous for our works of kindness —
Fame is not born alone of strength or skill;
It sometimes comes from deafness and from blindness
To petty words and faults, and loving still.

We can be rich in gentle smiles and sunny:
A jeweled soul exceeds a royal crown.
The richest men sometimes have little money,
And Croesus oft's the poorest man in town.

THE EPICURE

I've sipped a rich man's sparkling wine,
His silverware I've handled.
I've placed these battered legs of mine
'Neath tables gayly candled.
I dine on rare and costly fare
Whene'er good fortune lets me,
But there's no meal that can compare
With those the missus gets me.

I've had your steaks three inches thick
With all your Sam Ward trimming,
I've had the breast of milk-fed chick
In luscious gravy swimming.
To dine in swell café or club
But irritates and frets me;
Give me the plain and wholesome grub —
The grub the missus gets me.

Two kiddies smiling at the board,
The cook right at the table,
The four of us, a hungry horde,
To beat that none is able.
A big meat pie, with flaky crust!
'Tis then that joy besets me;
Oh, I could eat until I "bust,"
Those meals the missus gets me.

THE GENTLE GARDENER

I'd like to leave but daffodills to mark my little way,
To leave but tulips red and white behind me as I stray;
I'd like to pass away from earth and feel I'd left behind
But roses and forget-me-nots for all who come to find.

I'd like to sow the barren spots with all the flowers of earth,
To leave a path where those who come should find but gentle mirth;
And when at last I'm called upon to join the heavenly throng
I'd like to feel along my way I'd left no sign of wrong.

And yet the cares are many and the hours of toil are few;
There is not time enough on earth for all I'd like to do;
But, having lived and having toiled, I'd like the world to find
Some little touch of beauty that my soul had left behind.

THE FINEST AGE

When he was only nine months old,
And plump and round and pink of cheek,
A joy to tickle and to hold,
Before he'd even learned to speak,
His gentle mother used to say:
"It is too bad that he must grow.
If I could only have my way
His baby ways we'd always know."

And then the year was turned, and he
Began to toddle round the floor
And name the things that he could see
And soil the dresses that he wore.
Then many a night she whispered low:
"Our baby now is such a joy
I hate to think that he must grow
To be a wild and heedless boy."

But on he went and sweeter grew,
And then his mother, I recall,
Wished she could keep him always two,
For that's the finest age of all.
She thought the selfsame thing at three,
And now that he is four, she sighs
To think he cannot always be
The youngster with the laughing eyes.

Oh, little boy, my wish is not
  Always to keep you four years old.
Each night I stand beside your cot
  And think of what the years may hold;
And looking down on you I pray
  That when we've lost our baby small,
The mother of our man will say
  "This is the finest age of all."

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

I do not think all failure's undeserved,
  And all success is merely someone's luck;
Some men are down because they were unnerved,
  And some are up because they kept their pluck.
Some men are down because they chose to shirk;
Some men are high because they did their work.

I do not think that all the poor are good,
  That riches are the uniform of shame;
The beggar might have conquered if he would,
  And that he begs, the world is not to blame.
Misfortune is not all that comes to mar;
Most men, themselves, have shaped the things
    they are.

CARE-FREE YOUTH

The skies are blue and the sun is out and the grass is green and soft
And the old charm's back in the apple tree and it calls a boy aloft;
And the same low voice that the old don't hear, but the care-free youngsters do,
Is calling them to the fields and streams and the joys that once I knew.
And if youth be wild desire for play and care is the mark of men,
Beneath the skin that Time has tanned I'm a madcap youngster then.

Far richer than king with his crown of gold and his heavy weight of care
Is the sunburned boy with his stone-bruised feet and his tousled shock of hair;
For the king can hear but the cry of hate or the sickly sound of praise,
And lost to him are the voices sweet that called in his boyhood days.
Far better than ruler, with pomp and power and riches, is it to be
The urchin gay in his tattered clothes that is climbing the apple tree.

Oh, once I heard all the calls that come to the quick, glad ears of boys,

And a certain spot on the river bank told me of
its many joys,
And certain fields and certain trees were loyal
friends to me,
And I knew the birds, and I owned a dog, and
we both could hear and see.
Oh, never from tongues of men have dropped
such messages wholly glad
As the things that live in the great outdoors
once told to a little lad.

And I'm sorry for him who cannot hear what
the tall trees have to say,
Who is deaf to the call of a running stream
and the lanes that lead to play.
The boy that shins up the faithful elm or
sprawls on a river bank
Is more richly blessed with the joys of life than
any old man of rank.
For youth is the golden time of life, and this
battered old heart of mine
Beats fast to the march of its old-time joys,
when the sun begins to shine.

MY PAW SAID SO

Foxes can talk if you know how to listen,
My Paw said so.
Owls have big eyes that sparkle an' glisten,
My Paw said so.
Bears can turn flip-flaps an' climb ellum trees,
An' steal all the honey away from the bees,
An' they never mind winter becoz they don't freeze;
My Paw said so.

Girls is a-scared of a snake, but boys ain't,
My Paw said so.
They holler an' run; an' sometimes they faint,
My Paw said so.
But boys would be 'shamed to be frightened that way
When all that the snake wants to do is to play;
You've got to believe every word that I say,
My Paw said so.

Wolves ain't so bad if you treat 'em all right,
My Paw said so.
They're as fond of a game as they are of a fight,
My Paw said so.
An' all of the animals found in the wood
Ain't always ferocious. Most times they are good.

The trouble is mostly they're misunderstood,
My Paw said so.
You can think what you like, but I stick to it when
My Paw said so.
An' I'll keep right on sayin', again an' again,
My Paw said so.
Maybe foxes don't talk to such people as you,
An' bears never show you the tricks they can do,
But I know that the stories I'm tellin' are true,
My Paw said so.

LIFE'S TESTS

If never a sorrow came to us, and never a care we knew;
If every hope were realized, and every dream came true;
If only joy were found on earth, and no one ever sighed,
And never a friend proved false to us, and never a loved one died,
And never a burden bore us down, soul-sick and weary, too,
We'd yearn for tests to prove our worth and tasks for us to do.

THE PEACEFUL WARRIORS

Let others sing their songs of war
And chant their hymns of splendid death,
Let others praise the soldiers' ways
And hail the cannon's flaming breath.
Let others sing of Glory's fields
Where blood for Victory is paid,
I choose to sing some simple thing
To those who wield not gun or blade —
The peaceful warriors of trade.

Let others choose the deeds of war
For symbols of our nation's skill,
The blood-red coat, the rattling throat,
The regiment that charged the hill,
The boy who died to serve the flag,
Who heard the order and obeyed,
But leave to me the gallantry
Of those who labor unafraid —
The peaceful warriors of trade.

Aye, let me sing the splendid deeds
Of those who toil to serve mankind,
The men who break old ways and make
New paths for those who come behind.
The young who war with customs old
And face their problems, unafraid,
Who think and plan to lift for man
The burden that on him is laid —
The splendid warriors of trade.

I sing of battles with disease
And victories o'er death and pain,
Of ships that fly the summer sky,
And glorious deeds of strength and brain.
The call for help that rings through space
By which a vessel's course is stayed,
Thrills me far more than fields of gore,
Or heroes decked in golden braid —
I sing the warriors of trade.

FAILURES

'Tis better to have tried in vain,
Sincerely striving for a goal,
Than to have lived upon the plain
An idle and a timid soul.

'Tis better to have fought and spent
Your courage, missing all applause,
Than to have lived in smug content
And never ventured for a cause.

For he who tries and fails may be
The founder of a better day;
Though never his the victory,
From him shall others learn the way.

RAISIN PIE

There's a heap of pent-up goodness in the yellow
bantam corn,
And I sort o' like to linger round a berry patch
at morn;
Oh, the Lord has set our table with a stock o'
things to eat
An' there's just enough o' bitter in the blend
to cut the sweet,
But I run the whole list over, an' it seems
somehow that I
Find the keenest sort o' pleasure in a chunk
o' raisin pie.

There are pies that start the water circulatin' in
the mouth;
There are pies that wear the flavor of the warm
an' sunny south;
Some with oriental spices spur the drowsy appe-
tite
An' just fill a fellow's being with a thrill o'
real delight;
But for downright solid goodness that comes
drippin' from the sky
There is nothing quite the equal of a chunk o'
raisin pie.

I'm admittin' tastes are diff'runt, I'm not settin'
up myself

As the judge an' final critic of the good things
on the shelf.
I'm just sort o' payin' tribute to a simple joy on
earth,
Sort o' feebly testifyin' to its lasting charm an'
worth,
An' I'll hold to this conclusion till it comes my
time to die,
That there's no dessert that's finer than a chunk
o' raisin pie.

PREPAREDNESS

Right must not live in idleness,
Nor dwell in smug content;
It must be strong, against the throng
Of foes, on evil bent.

Justice must not a weakling be
But it must guard its own,
And live each day, that none can say
Justice is overthrown.

Peace, the sweet glory of the world,
Faces a duty, too;
Death is her fate, leaves she one gate
For war to enter through.

THE READY ARTISTS

The green is in the meadow and the blue is in the sky,
And all of Nature's artists have their colors handy by;
With a few days bright with sunshine and a few nights free from frost
They will start to splash their colors quite regardless of the cost.
There's an artist waiting ready at each bleak and dismal spot
To paint the flashing tulip or the meek forget-me-not.

May is lurking in the distance and her lap is filled with flowers,
And the choicest of her blossoms very shortly will be ours.
There is not a lane so dreary or a field so dark with gloom
But that soon will be resplendent with its little touch of bloom.
There's an artist keen and eager to make beautiful each scene
And remove with colors gorgeous every trace of of what has been.

Oh, the world is now in mourning; round about
us all are spread
The ruins and the symbols of the winter that
is dead.
But the bleak and barren picture very shortly
now will pass,
For the halls of life are ready for their velvet
rugs of grass;
And the painters now are waiting with their
magic to replace
This dullness with a beauty that no mortal hand
can trace.

The green is in the meadow and the blue is in
the sky;
The chill of death is passing, life will shortly
greet the eye.
We shall revel soon in colors only Nature's
artists make
And the humblest plant that's sleeping unto
beauty shall awake.
For there's not a leaf forgotten, not a twig
neglected there,
And the tiniest of pansies shall the royal purple
wear.

THE HAPPIEST DAYS

You do not know it, little man,
In your summer coat of tan
And your legs bereft of hose
And your peeling, sunburned nose,
With a stone bruise on your toe,
Almost limping as you go
Running on your way to play
Through another summer day,
Friend of birds and streams and trees,
That your happiest days are these.

Little do you think to-day,
As you hurry to your play,
That a lot of us, grown old
In the chase for fame and gold,
Watch you as you pass along
Gayly whistling bits of song,
And in envy sit and dream
Of a long-neglected stream,
Where long buried are the joys
We possessed when we were boys.

Little chap, you cannot guess
All your sum of happiness;
Little value do you place
On your sunburned freckled face;

And if some shrewd fairy came
Offering sums of gold and fame
For your summer days of play,
You would barter them away
And believe that you had made
There and then a clever trade.

Time was we were boys like you,
Bare of foot and sunburned, too,
And, like you, we never guessed
All the riches we possessed;
We'd have traded them back then
For the hollow joys of men;
We'd have given them all to be
Rich and wise and forty-three.
For life never teaches boys
Just how precious are their joys.

Youth has fled and we are old.
Some of us have fame and gold;
Some of us are sorely scarred,
For the way of age is hard;
And we envy, little man,
You your splendid coat of tan,
Envy you your treasures rare,
Hours of joy beyond compare;
For we know, by teaching stern,
All that some day you must learn.

THE REAL BAIT

To gentle ways I am inclined;
I have no wish to kill.
To creatures dumb I would be kind;
I like them all, but still
Right now I think I'd like to be
Beside some rippling brook,
And grab a worm I'd brought with me
And slip him on a hook.

I'd like to put my hand once more
Into a rusty can
And turn those squirmy creatures o'er
Like nuggets in a pan;
And for a big one, once again,
With eager eyes I'd look,
As did a boy I knew, and then
Impale it on a hook.

I've had my share of fishing joy,
I've fished with patent bait,
With chub and minnow, but the boy
Is lord of sport's estate.
And no such pleasure comes to man
So rare as when he took
A worm from a tomato can
And slipped it on a hook.

I'd like to gaze with glowing eyes
  Upon that precious bait,
To view each fat worm as a prize
  To be accounted great.
And though I've passed from boyhood's term,
  And opened age's book,
I still would like to put a worm
  That wriggled on a hook.

TRUE NOBILITY

Who does his task from day to day
And meets whatever comes his way,
Believing God has willed it so,
Has found real greatness here below.

Who guards his post, no matter where,
Believing God must need him there,
Although but lowly toil it be,
Has risen to nobility.

For great and low there's but one test:
'Tis that each man shall do his best.
Who works with all the strength he can
Shall never die in debt to man.

THE SULKERS

The world's too busy now to pause
To listen to a whiner's cause;
It has no time to stop and pet
The sulker in a peevish fret,
Who wails he'll neither work nor play
Because things haven't gone his way.

The world keeps plodding right along
And gives its favors right or wrong
To all who have the grit to work
Regardless of the fool or shirk.
The world says this to every man:
"Go out and do the best you can."

The world's too busy to implore
The beaten one to try once more;
'Twill help him if he wants to rise,
And boost him if he bravely tries,
And shows determination grim;
But it won't stop to baby him.

The world is occupied with men
Who fall but quickly rise again;
But those who whine because they're hit
And step aside to sulk a bit
Are doomed some day to wake and find
The world has left them far behind.

PURPOSE

Not for the sake of the gold,
  Not for the sake of the fame,
Not for the prize would I hold
  Any ambition or aim:
I would be brave and be true
Just for the good I can do.

I would be useful on earth,
  Serving some purpose or cause,
Doing some labor of worth,
  Giving no thought to applause.
Thinking less of the gold or the fame
Than the joy and the thrill of the game.

Medals their brightness may lose,
  Fame be forgotten or fade,
Any reward we may choose
  Leaves the account still unpaid.
But little real happiness lies
In fighting alone for a prize.

Give me the thrill of the task,
  The joy of the battle and strife,
Of being of use, and I'll ask
  No greater reward from this life.
Better than fame or applause
Is striving to further a cause.

MOTHER'S GLASSES

I've told about the times that Ma can't find
her pocketbook,
And how we have to hustle round for it to help
her look,
But there's another care we know that often
comes our way,
I guess it happens easily a dozen times a day.
It starts when first the postman through the
door a letter passes,
And Ma says: "Goodness gracious me! Wher-
ever are my glasses?"

We hunt 'em on the mantelpiece an' by the
kitchen sink,
Until Ma says: "Now, children, stop, an' give
me time to think
Just when it was I used 'em last an' just
exactly where.
Yes, now I know — the dining room. I'm sure
you'll find 'em there."
We even look behind the clock, we busy boys
an' lasses,
Until somebody runs across Ma's missing pair of
glasses.

We've found 'em in the Bible, an' we've found 'em in the flour,
We've found 'em in the sugar bowl, an' once we looked an hour
Before we came across 'em in the padding of her chair;
An' many a time we've found 'em in the topknot of her hair.
It's a search that ruins order an' the home completely wrecks,
For there's no place where you may not find poor Ma's elusive specs.

But we're mighty glad, I tell you, that the duty's ours to do,
An' we hope to hunt those glasses till our time of life is through;
It's a little bit of service that is joyous in its thrill,
It's a task that calls us daily an' we hope it always will.
Rich or poor, the saddest mortals of all the joyless masses
Are the ones who have no mother dear to lose her reading glasses.

THE PRINCESS PAT'S

Written when the Canadian regiment, known as the "Princess Pat's," left for the front.

A touch of the plain and the prairie,
A bit of the Motherland, too;
A strain of the fur-trapper wary,
A blend of the old and the new;
A bit of the pioneer splendor
That opened the wilderness' flats,
A touch of the home-lover, tender,
You'll find in the boys they call Pat's.

The glory and grace of the maple,
The strength that is born of the wheat,
The pride of a stock that is staple,
The bronze of a midsummer heat;
A blending of wisdom and daring,
The best of a new land, and that's
The regiment gallantly bearing
The neat little title of Pat's.

A bit of the man who has neighbored
With mountains and forests and streams,
A touch of the man who has labored
To model and fashion his dreams;
The strength of an age of clean living,
Of right-minded fatherly chats,
The best that a land could be giving
Is there in the breasts of the Pat's.

BE A FRIEND

Be a friend. You don't need money:
Just a disposition sunny;
Just the wish to help another
Get along some way or other;
Just a kindly hand extended
Out to one who's unbefriended;
Just the will to give or lend,
This will make you someone's friend.

Be a friend. You don't need glory.
Friendship is a simple story.
Pass by trifling errors blindly,
Gaze on honest effort kindly,
Cheer the youth who's bravely trying,
Pity him who's sadly sighing;
Just a little labor spend
On the duties of a friend.

Be a friend. The pay is bigger
(Though not written by a figure)
Than is earned by people clever
In what's merely self-endeavor.
You'll have friends instead of neighbors
For the profits of your labors;
You'll be richer in the end
Than a prince, if you're a friend.

THANKSGIVING

Thankful for the glory of the old Red, White and Blue,
For the spirit of America that still is staunch and true,
For the laughter of our children and the sunlight in their eyes,
And the joy of radiant mothers and their evening lullabies;
And thankful that our harvests wear no taint of blood to-day,
But were sown and reaped by toilers who were light of heart and gay.

Thankful for the riches that are ours to claim and keep,
The joy of honest labor and the boon of happy sleep,
For each little family circle where there is no empty chair
Save where God has sent the sorrow for the loving hearts to bear;
And thankful for the loyal souls and brave hearts of the past
Who builded that contentment should be with us to the last.

Thankful for the plenty that our peaceful land has blessed,
For the rising sun that beckons every man to do his best,
For the goal that lies before him and the promise when he sows
That his hand shall reap the harvest, undisturbed by cruel foes;
For the flaming torch of justice, symbolizing as it burns:
Here none may rob the toiler of the prize he fairly earns.

To-day our thanks we're giving for the riches that are ours,
For the red fruits of the orchards and the perfume of the flowers,
For our homes with laughter ringing and our hearthfires blazing bright,
For our land of peace and plenty and our land of truth and right;
And we're thankful for the glory of the old Red, White and Blue,
For the spirit of our fathers and a manhood that is true.

MA AND HER CHECK BOOK

Ma has a dandy little book that's full of narrow slips,
An' when she wants to pay a bill a page from it she rips;
She just writes in the dollars and the cents and signs her name
An' that's as good as money, though it doesn't look the same.
When she wants another bonnet or some feathers for her neck,
She promptly goes an' gets 'em, an' she writes another check.
I don't just understand it, but I know she sputters when
Pa says to her at supper: "Well! You're overdrawn again!"

Ma's not a business woman, she is much too kind of heart
To squabble over pennies or to play a selfish part,
An' when someone asks for money, she's not one to stop an' think
Of a little piece of paper an' the cost of pen an' ink.

She just tells him very sweetly if he'll only wait a bit
An' be seated in the parlor, she will write a check for it.
She can write one out for twenty just as easily as ten,
An' forgets that Pa may grumble: "Well, you're overdrawn again!"

Pa says it looks as though he'll have to start in workin' nights
To gather in the money for the checks that mother writes.
He says that every morning when he's summoned to the phone,
He's afraid the bank is calling to make mother's shortage known.
He tells his friends if ever anything our fortune wrecks
They can trace it to the moment mother started writing checks.
He's got so that he trembles when he sees her fountain pen
An' he mutters: "Do be careful! You'll be overdrawn again!"

THE FISHING CURE

There's nothing that builds up a toil-weary soul
Like a day on a stream,
Back on the banks of the old fishing hole
Where a fellow can dream.
There's nothing so good for a man as to flee
From the city and lie
Full length in the shade of a whispering tree
And gaze at the sky.

Out there where the strife and the greed are forgot
And the struggle for pelf,
A man can get rid of each taint and each spot
And clean up himself;
He can be what he wanted to be when a boy,
If only in dreams;
And revel once more in the depths of a joy
That's as real as it seems.

The things that he hates never follow him there —
The jar of the street,
The rivalries petty, the struggling unfair —
For the open is sweet.
In purity's realm he can rest and be clean,
Be he humble or great,
And as peaceful his soul may become as the scene
That his eyes contemplate.

It is good for the world that men hunger to go
To the banks of a stream,
And weary of sham and of pomp and of show
They have somewhere to dream.
For this life would be dreary and sordid and base
Did they not now and then
Seek refreshment and calm in God's wide, open space
And come back to be men.

THE HAPPY SLOW THINKER

Full many a time a thought has come
That had a bitter meaning in it.
And in the conversation's hum
I lost it ere I could begin it.

I've had it on my tongue to spring
Some poisoned quip that I thought clever;
Then something happened and the sting
Unuttered went, and died forever.

A lot of bitter thoughts I've had
To silence fellows and to flay 'em,
But next day always I've been glad
I wasn't quick enough to say 'em.

OUT-OF-DOORS

The kids are out-of-doors once more;
The heavy leggins that they wore,
The winter caps that covered ears
Are put away, and no more tears
Are shed because they cannot go
Until they're bundled up just so.
No more she wonders when they're gone
If they have put their rubbers on;
No longer are they hourly told
To guard themselves against a cold;
Bareheaded now they romp and run
Warmed only by the kindly sun.

She's put their heavy clothes away
And turned the children out to play,
And all the morning long they race
Like madcaps round about the place.
The robins on the fences sing
A gayer song of welcoming,
And seem as though they had a share
In all the fun they're having there.
The wrens and sparrows twitter, too,
A louder and a noisier crew,
As though it pleased them all to see
The youngsters out of doors and free.

Outdoors they scamper to their play
With merry din the livelong day,
And hungrily they jostle in
The favor of the maid to win;
Then, armed with cookies or with cake,
Their way into the yard they make,
And every feathered playmate comes
To gather up his share of crumbs.
The finest garden that I know
Is one where little children grow,
Where cheeks turn brown and eyes are bright,
And all is laughter and delight.

Oh, you may brag of gardens fine,
But let the children race in mine;
And let the roses, white and red,
Make gay the ground whereon they tread.
And who for bloom perfection seeks,
Should mark the color on their cheeks;
No music that the robin spouts
Is equal to their merry shouts;
There is no foliage to compare
With youngsters' sun-kissed, tousled hair:
Spring's greatest joy beyond a doubt
Is when it brings the children out.

REAL SINGING

You can talk about your music, and your operatic airs,
And your phonographic record that Caruso's tenor bears;
But there isn't any music that such wondrous joy can bring
Like the concert when the kiddies and their mother start to sing.

When the supper time is over, then the mother starts to play
Some simple little ditty, and our concert's under way.
And I'm happier and richer than a millionaire or king
When I listen to the kiddies and their mother as they sing.

There's a sweetness most appealing in the trilling of their notes:
It is innocence that's pouring from their little baby throats;
And I gaze at them enraptured, for my joy's a real thing
Every evening when the kiddies and their mother start to sing.

THE BUMPS AND BRUISES DOCTOR

I'm the bumps and bruises doctor;
I'm the expert that they seek
When their rough and tumble playing
Leaves a scar on leg or cheek.
I'm the rapid, certain curer
For the wounds of every fall;
I'm the pain eradicator;
I can always heal them all.

Bumps on little people's foreheads
I can quickly smooth away;
I take splinters out of fingers
Without very much delay.
Little sorrows I can banish
With the magic of my touch;
I can fix a bruise that's dreadful
So it isn't hurting much.

I'm the bumps and bruises doctor,
And I answer every call,
And my fee is very simple,
Just a kiss, and that is all.
And I'm sitting here and wishing
In the years that are to be,
When they face life's real troubles
That they'll bring them all to me.

WHEN PA COUNTS

Pa's not so very big or brave; he can't lift
weights like Uncle Jim;
His hands are soft like little girls'; most anyone
could wallop him.
Ma weighs a whole lot more than Pa. When
they go swimming, she could stay
Out in the river all day long, but Pa gets frozen
right away.
But when the thunder starts to roll, an' lightnin'
spits, Ma says, "Oh, dear,
I'm sure we'll all of us be killed. I only wish
your Pa was here."

Pa's cheeks are thin an' kinder pale; he couldn't
rough it worth a cent.
He couldn't stand the hike we had the day the
Boy Scouts camping went.
He has to hire a man to dig the garden, coz his
back gets lame,
An' he'd be crippled for a week, if he should
play a baseball game.
But when a thunder-storm comes up, Ma sits an'
shivers in the gloam
An' every time the thunder rolls, she says: "I
wish your Pa was home."

I don't know just what Pa could do if he were
home, he seems so frail,
But every time the skies grow black I notice Ma
gets rather pale.
An' when she's called us children in, an' locked
the windows an' the doors,
She jumps at every lightnin' flash an' trembles
when the thunder roars.
An' when the baby starts to cry, she wrings her
hands an' says: "Oh, dear!
It's terrible! It's terrible! I only wish your
Pa was here."

PEACE

A man must earn his hour of peace,
Must pay for it with hours of strife and care,
Must win by toil the evening's sweet release,
The rest that may be portioned for his share;
The idler never knows it, never can.
Peace is the glory ever of a man.

A man must win contentment for his soul,
Must battle for it bravely day by day;
The peace he seeks is not a near-by goal;
To claim it he must tread a rugged way.
The shirker never knows a tranquil breast;
Peace but rewards the man who does his best.

NO PLACE TO GO

The happiest nights
I ever know
Are those when I've
No place to go,
And the missus says
When the day is through:
"To-night we haven't
A thing to do."

Oh, the joy of it,
And the peace untold
Of sitting 'round
In my slippers old,
With my pipe and book
In my easy chair,
Knowing I needn't
Go anywhere.

Needn't hurry
My evening meal
Nor force the smiles
That I do not feel,
But can grab a book
From a near-by shelf,
And drop all sham
And be myself.

Oh, the charm of it
  And the comfort rare;
Nothing on earth
  With it can compare;
And I'm sorry for him
  Who doesn't know
The joy of having
  No place to go.

DEFEAT

No one is beat till he quits,
  No one is through till he stops,
No matter how hard Failure hits,
  No matter how often he drops,
A fellow's not down till he lies
In the dust and refuses to rise.

Fate can slam him and bang him around,
  And batter his frame till he's sore,
But she never can say that he's downed
  While he bobs up serenely for more.
A fellow's not dead till he dies,
Nor beat till no longer he tries.

A PATRIOTIC WISH

I'd like to be the sort of man the flag could
boast about;
I'd like to be the sort of man it cannot live
without;
I'd like to be the type of man
That really is American:
The head-erect and shoulders-square,
Clean-minded fellow, just and fair,
That all men picture when they see
The glorious banner of the free.

I'd like to be the sort of man the flag now
typifies,
The kind of man we really want the flag to
symbolize;
The loyal brother to a trust,
The big, unselfish soul and just,
The friend of every man oppressed,
The strong support of all that's best,
The sturdy chap the banner's meant,
Where'er it flies, to represent.

I'd like to be the sort of man the flag's supposed
to mean,
The man that all in fancy see wherever it is
seen,
The chap that's ready for a fight
Whenever there's a wrong to right,

The friend in every time of need,
The doer of the daring deed,
The clean and generous handed man
That is a real American.

THE PRICE OF JOY

You don't begrudge the labor when the roses
start to bloom;
You don't recall the dreary days that won you
their perfume;
You don't recall a single care
You spent upon the garden there;
And all the toil
Of tilling soil
Is quite forgot the day the first
Pink rosebuds into beauty burst.

You don't begrudge the trials grim when joy
has come to you;
You don't recall the dreary days when all your
skies are blue;
And though you've trod a weary mile
The ache of it was all worth while;
And all the stings
And bitter flings
Are wiped away upon the day
Success comes dancing down the way.

THE THINGS THAT MAKE A SOLDIER GREAT

The things that make a soldier great and send
him out to die,
To face the flaming cannon's mouth nor ever
question why,
Are lilacs by a little porch, the row of tulips
red,
The peonies and pansies, too, the old petunia bed,
The grass plot where his children play, the roses
on the wall:
'Tis these that make a soldier great. He's fight-
ing for them all.

'Tis not the pomp and pride of kings that make
a soldier brave;
'Tis not allegiance to the flag that over him may
wave;
For soldiers never fight so well on land or on
the foam
As when behind the cause they see the little
place called home.
Endanger but that humble street whereon his
children run,
You make a soldier of the man who never bore
a gun.

What is it through the battle smoke the valiant soldier sees?
The little garden far away, the budding apple trees,
The little patch of ground back there, the children at their play,
Perhaps a tiny mound behind the simple church of gray.
The golden thread of courage isn't linked to castle dome
But to the spot, where'er it be — the humble spot called home.

And now the lilacs bud again and all is lovely there
And homesick soldiers far away know spring is in the air;
The tulips come to bloom again, the grass once more is green,
And every man can see the spot where all his joys have been.
He sees his children smile at him, he hears the bugle call,
And only death can stop him now — he's fighting for them all.

Ma says no, it's too much care
An' it will scatter germs an' hair,
An' it's a nuisance through and through,
An' barks when you don't want it to;
An' carries dirt from off the street,
An' tracks the carpets with its feet.
But it's a sign he's growin' up
When he is longin' for a pup.

Most every night he comes to me
An' climbs a-straddle of my knee
An' starts to fondle me an' pet,
Then asks me if I've found one yet.
An' ma says: "Now don't tell him yes;
You know they make an awful mess,"
An' starts their faults to catalogue.
But every boy should have a dog.

An' some night when he comes to me,
Deep in my pocket there will be
The pup he's hungry to possess
Or else I sadly miss my guess.
For I remember all the joy
A dog meant to a little boy
Who loved it in the long ago,
The joy that's now his right to know.

HOMESICK

It's tough when you are homesick in a strange
and distant place;
It's anguish when you're hungry for an old-
familiar face.
And yearning for the good folks and the joys
you used to know,
When you're miles away from friendship, is a
bitter sort of woe.
But it's tougher, let me tell you, and a stiffer
discipline
To see them through the window, and to know
you can't go in.

Oh, I never knew the meaning of that red sign
on the door,
Never really understood it, never thought of it
before;
But I'll never see another since they've tacked
one up on mine
But I'll think about the father that is barred
from all that's fine.
And I'll think about the mother who is prisoner
in there
So her little son or daughter shall not miss a
mother's care.
And I'll share a fellow feeling with the saddest
of my kin,
The dad beside the gateway of the home he
can't go in.

Oh, we laugh and joke together and the mother tries to be
Brave and sunny in her prison, and she thinks she's fooling me;
And I do my bravest smiling and I feign a merry air
In the hope she won't discover that I'm burdened down with care.
But it's only empty laughter, and there's nothing in the grin
When you're talking through the window of the home you can't go in.

THE PERFECT DINNER TABLE

A table cloth that's slightly soiled
Where greasy little hands have toiled;
The napkins kept in silver rings,
And only ordinary things
From which to eat, a simple fare,
And just the wife and kiddies there,
And while I serve, the clatter glad
Of little girl and little lad
Who have so very much to say
About the happenings of the day.

Four big round eyes that dance with glee,
Forever flashing joys at me,
Two little tongues that race and run
To tell of troubles and of fun;

The mother with a patient smile
Who knows that she must wait awhile
Before she'll get a chance to say
What she's discovered through the day.
She steps aside for girl and lad
Who have so much to tell their dad.

Our manners may not be the best;
Perhaps our elbows often rest
Upon the table, and at times
That very worst of dinner crimes,
That very shameful act and rude
Of speaking ere you've downed your food,
Too frequently, I fear, is done,
So fast the little voices run.
Yet why should table manners stay
Those tongues that have so much to say?

At many a table I have been
Where wealth and luxury were seen,
And I have dined in halls of pride
Where all the guests were dignified;
But when it comes to pleasure rare
The perfect dinner table's where
No stranger's face is ever known:
The dinner hour we spend alone,
When little girl and little lad
Run riot telling things to dad.

TO-MORROW

He was going to be all that a mortal should be
To-morrow.
No one should be kinder or braver than he
To-morrow.
A friend who was troubled and weary he knew,
Who'd be glad of a lift and who needed it, too;
On him he would call and see what he could do
To-morrow.

Each morning he stacked up the letters he'd write
To-morrow.
And thought of the folks he would fill with delight
To-morrow.
It was too bad, indeed, he was busy to-day,
And hadn't a minute to stop on his way;
More time he would have to give others, he'd say,
To-morrow.

The greatest of workers this man would have been
To-morrow.
The world would have known him, had he ever seen
To-morrow.

But the fact is he died and he faded from view,
And all that he left here when living was through
Was a mountain of things he intended to do
To-morrow.

A PRAYER

God grant me kindly thought
And patience through the day,
And in the things I've wrought
Let no man living say
That hate's grim mark has stained
What little joy I've gained.

God keep my nature sweet,
Teach me to bear a blow,
Disaster and defeat,
And no resentment show.
If failure must be mine
Sustain this soul of mine.

God grant me strength to face
Undaunted day or night;
To stoop to no disgrace
To win my little fight;
Let me be, when it is o'er,
As manly as before.

TO THE LADY IN THE ELECTRIC

Lady in the show case carriage,
Do not think that I'm a bear;
Not for worlds would I disparage
One so gracious and so fair;
Do not think that I am blind to
One who has a smile seraphic;
You I'd never be unkind to,
But you are impeding traffic.

If I had some way of knowing
What you are about to do,
Just exactly where you're going,
If I could depend on you,
I could keep my engine churning,
Travel on and never mind you.
Lady, when you think of turning,
Why not signal us behind you?

Lady, free from care and worry,
Riding in your plate-glass car,
Some of us are in a hurry;
Some of us must travel far.
I, myself, am eager, very,
To be journeying on my way;
Lady, is it necessary
To monopolize the highway?

Lady, at the handle, steering,
Why not keep a course that's straight?
Know you not that wildly veering
As you do, is tempting fate?
Do not think my horn I'm blowing
Just on purpose to harass you,
It is just a signal showing
That I'd safely like to pass you.

Lady, there are times a duty
Must be done, however saddening;
It is hard to tell a beauty
That she's very often maddening.
And I would not now be saying
Harsh and cruel words to fuss you,
But when traffic you're delaying
You are forcing men to cuss you.

THE MAN WHO COULDN'T SAVE

He spent what he made, or he gave it away,
Tried to save money, and would for a day,
Started a bank-account time an' again,
Got a hundred or so for a nest egg, an' then
Some fellow that needed it more than he did,
Who was down on his luck, with a sick wife
or kid,
Came along an' he wasted no time till he went
An' drew out the coin that for saving was
meant.

They say he died poor, and I guess that is so:
To pile up a fortune he hadn't a show;
He worked all the time and good money he made,
Was known as an excellent man at his trade,
But he saw too much, heard too much, felt too
much here
To save anything by the end of the year,
An' the shabbiest wreck the Lord ever let live
Could get money from him if he had it to give.

I've seen him slip dimes to the bums on the street
Who told him they hungered for something to
eat,
An' though I remarked they were going for
drink
He'd say: "Mebbe so. But I'd just hate to
think

That fellow was hungry an' I'd passed him by;
I'd rather be fooled twenty times by a lie
Than wonder if one of 'em I wouldn't feed
Had told me the truth an' was really in need."

Never stinted his family out of a thing:
They had everything that his money could bring;
Said he'd rather be broke and just know they
were glad,
Than rich, with them pining an' wishing they had
Some of the pleasures his money would buy;
Said he never could look a bank book in the eye
If he knew it had grown on the pleasures and
joys
That he'd robbed from his wife and his girls
and his boys.

Queer sort of notion he had, I confess,
Yet many a rich man on earth is mourned less.
All who had known him came back to his side
To honor his name on the day that he died.
Didn't leave much in the bank, it is true,
But did leave a fortune in people who knew
The big heart of him, an' I'm willing to swear
That to-day he is one of the richest up there.

ANSWERING HIM

"When shall I be a man?" he said,
As I was putting him to bed.
"How many years will have to be
Before Time makes a man of me?
And will I be a man when I
Am grown up big?" I heaved a sigh,
Because it called for careful thought
To give the answer that he sought.

And so I sat him on my knee,
And said to him: "A man you'll be
When you have learned that honor brings
More joy than all the crowns of kings;
That it is better to be true
To all who know and trust in you
Than all the gold of earth to gain
If winning it shall leave a stain.

"When you can fight for victory sweet,
Yet bravely swallow down defeat,
And cling to hope and keep the right,
Nor use deceit instead of might;
When you are kind and brave and clean,
And fair to all and never mean;
When there is good in all you plan,
That day, my boy, you'll be a man.

"Some of us learn this truth too late;
That years alone can't make us great;
That many who are three-score, ten
Have fallen short of being men,
Because in selfishness they fought
And toiled without refining thought;
And whether wrong or whether right
They lived but for their own delight.

"When you have learned that you must hold
Your honor dearer far than gold;
That no ill-gotten wealth or fame
Can pay you for your tarnished name;
And when in all you say or do
Of others you're considerate, too,
Content to do the best you can
By such a creed, you'll be a man."

FATHER AND SON

Be more than his dad,
Be a chum to the lad;
Be a part of his life
Every hour of the day;
Find time to talk with him,
Take time to walk with him,
Share in his studies
And share in his play;
Take him to places,
To ball games and races,
Teach him the things
That you want him to know;
Don't live apart from him,
Don't keep your heart from him,
Be his best comrade,
He's needing you so!

Never neglect him,
Though young, still respect him,
Hear his opinions
With patience and pride;
Show him his error,
But be not a terror,
Grim-visaged and fearful,
When he's at your side.

Know what his thoughts are,
Know what his sports are,
Know all his playmates,
It's easy to learn to;
Be such a father
That when troubles gather
You'll be the first one
For counsel, he'll turn to.

You can inspire him
With courage, and fire him
Hot with ambition
For deeds that are good;
He'll not betray you
Nor illy repay you,
If you have taught him
The things that you should.
Father and son
Must in all things be one —
Partners in trouble
And comrades in joy.
More than a dad
Was the best pal you had;
Be such a chum
As you knew, to your boy.

THE JUNE COUPLE

She is fair to see and sweet,
Dainty from her head to feet,
Modest, as her blushing shows,
Happy, as her smiles disclose,
And the young man at her side
Nervously attempts to hide
Underneath a visage grim
That the fuss is bothering him.

Pause a moment, happy pair!
This is not the station where
Romance ends, and wooing stops
And the charm from courtship drops;
This is but the outward gate
Where the souls of mortals mate,
But the border of the land
You must travel hand in hand.

You who come to marriage, bring
All your tenderness, and cling
Steadfastly to all the ways
That have marked your wooing days.
You are only starting out
On life's roadways, hedged about
Thick with roses and with tares,
Sweet delights and bitter cares.

Heretofore you've only played
At love's game, young man and maid;
Only known it at its best;
Now you'll have to face its test.
You must prove your love worth while,
Something time cannot defile,
Something neither care nor pain
Can destroy or mar or stain.

You are now about to show
Whether love is real or no;
Yonder down the lane of life
You will find, as man and wife,
Sorrows, disappointments, doubt,
Hope will almost flicker out;
But if rightly you are wed
Love will linger where you tread.

There are joys that you will share,
Joys to balance every care;
Arm in arm remain, and you
Will not fear the storms that brew,
If when you are sorest tried
You face your trials, side by side.
Now your wooing days are done,
And your loving years begun.

AT THE DOOR

He wiped his shoes before his door,
But ere he entered he did more:
'Twas not enough to cleanse his feet
Of dirt they'd gathered in the street;
He stood and dusted off his mind
And left all trace of care behind.
"In here I will not take," said he,
"The stains the day has brought to me.

"Beyond this door shall never go
The burdens that are mine to know;
The day is done, and here I leave
The petty things that vex and grieve;
What clings to me of hate and sin
To them I will not carry in;
Only the good shall go with me
For their devoted eyes to see.

"I will not burden them with cares,
Nor track the home with grim affairs;
I will not at my table sit
With soul unclean, and mind unfit;
Beyond this door I will not take
The outward signs of inward ache;
I will not take a dreary mind
Into this house for them to find."

He wiped his shoes before his door,
But paused to do a little more.

He dusted off the stains of strife,
The mud that's incident to life,
The blemishes of careless thought,
The traces of the fight he'd fought,
The selfish humors and the mean,
And when he entered he was clean.

DUTY

To do your little bit of toil,
To play life's game with head erect;
To stoop to nothing that would soil
Your honor or your self-respect;
To win what gold and fame you can,
But first of all to be a man.

To know the bitter and the sweet,
The sunshine and the days of rain;
To meet both victory and defeat,
Nor boast too loudly nor complain;
To face whatever fates befall
And be a man throughout it all.

To seek success in honest strife,
But not to value it so much
That, winning it, you go through life
Stained by dishonor's scarlet touch.
What goal or dream you choose, pursue,
But be a man whate'er you do!

A BEAR STORY

There was a bear — his name was Jim,
An' children weren't askeered of him,
An' he lived in a cave, where he
Was confortubbul as could be,
An' in that cave, so my Pa said,
Jim always kept a stock of bread
An' honey, so that he could treat
The boys an' girls along his street.

An' all that Jim could say was "Woof!"
An' give a grunt that went like "Soof!"
An' Pa says when his grunt went off
It sounded jus' like Grandpa's cough,
Or like our Jerry when he's mad
An' growls at peddler men that's bad.
While grown-ups were afraid of Jim,
Kids could do anything with him.

One day a little boy like me
That had a sister Marjorie,
Was walking through the woods, an' they
Heard something "woofing" down that way,
An' they was scared an' stood stock still
An' wished they had a gun to kill
Whatever 'twas, but little boys
Don't have no guns that make a noise.

An' soon the " woofing " closer grew,
An' then a bear came into view,
The biggest bear you ever saw —
Ma's muff was smaller than his paw.
He saw the children an' he said:
" I ain't a-goin' to kill you dead;
You needn't turn away an' run;
I'm only scarin' you for fun."

An' then he stood up just like those
Big bears in circuses an' shows,
An' danced a jig, an' rolled about
An' said " Woof! Woof! " which meant " Look out! "
An' turned a somersault as slick
As any boy can do the trick.
Those children had been told of Jim
An' they decided it was him.

They stroked his nose when they got brave,
An' followed him into his cave,
An' Jim asked them if they liked honey,
They said they did. Said Jim: " That's funny.
I've asked a thousand boys or so
That question, an' not one's said no."
What happened then I cannot say
'Cause next I knew 'twas light as day.

AUTUMN AT THE ORCHARD

The sumac's flaming scarlet on the edges o' the lake,
An' the pear trees are invitin' everyone t' come an' shake.
Now the gorgeous tints of autumn are appearin' everywhere
Till it seems that you can almost see the Master Painter there.
There's a solemn sort o' stillness that's pervadin' every thing,
Save the farewell songs to summer that the feathered tenors sing,
An' you quite forget the city where disgruntled folks are kickin'
Off yonder with the Pelletiers, when spies are ripe fer pickin'.

The Holsteins are a-posin' in a clearin' near a wood,
Very dignified an' stately, just as though they understood
That they're lending to life's pictures just the touch the Master needs,
An' they're preachin' more refinement than a lot o' printed creeds.
The orchard's fairly groanin' with the gifts o' God to man,
Just as though they meant to shame us who have doubted once His plan.

Oh, there's somethin' most inspirin' to a soul in need o' prickin'
Off yonder with the Pelletiers when spies are ripe fer pickin'.

The frisky little Shetlands now are growin' shaggy coats
An' acquirin' silken mufflers of their own to guard their throats;
An' a Russian wolf-hound puppy left its mother yesterday,
An' a tinge o' sorrow touched us as we saw it go away.
For the sight was full o' meanin', an' we knew, when it had gone,
'Twas a symbol of the partin's that the years are bringin' on.
Oh, a feller must be better — to his faith he can't help stickin'
Off yonder with the Pelletiers when spies are ripe fer pickin'.

The year is almost over, now at dusk the valleys glow
With the misty mantle chillin', that is hangin' very low.
An' each mornin' sees the maples just a little redder turned
Than they were the night we left 'em, an' the elms are browner burned.

An' a feller can't help feelin', an' I don't care
who it is,
That the mind that works such wonders has a
greater power than his.
Oh, I know that I'll remember till life's last few
sparks are flickin'
The lessons out at Pelletiers when spies were ripe
for pickin'.

WHEN PA COMES HOME

When Pa comes home, I'm at the door,
An' then he grabs me off the floor
An' throws me up an' catches me
When I come down, an' then, says he:
"Well, how'd you get along to-day?
An' were you good, an' did you play,
An' keep right out of mamma's way?
An' how'd you get that awful bump
Above your eye? My, what a lump!
An' who spilled jelly on your shirt?
An' where'd you ever find the dirt
That's on your hands? And my! Oh, my!
I guess those eyes have had a cry,
They look so red. What was it, pray?
What has been happening here to-day?"

An' then he drops his coat an' hat
Upon a chair, an' says: "What's that?

Who knocked that engine on its back
An' stepped upon that piece of track?"
An' then he takes me on his knee
An' says: "What's this that now I see?
Whatever can the matter be?
Who strewed those toys upon the floor,
An' left those things behind the door?
Who upset all those parlor chairs
An' threw those blocks upon the stairs?
I guess a cyclone called to-day
While I was workin' far away.
Who was it worried mamma so?
It can't be anyone I know."

An' then I laugh an' say: "It's me!
Me did most ever'thing you see.
Me got this bump the time me tripped.
An' here is where the jelly slipped
Right off my bread upon my shirt,
An' when me tumbled down it hurt.
That's how me got all over dirt.
Me threw those building blocks downstairs,
An' me upset the parlor chairs,
Coz when you're playin' train you've got
To move things 'round an awful lot."
An' then my Pa he kisses me
An' bounces me upon his knee
An' says: "Well, well, my little lad,
What glorious fun you must have had!"

MOTHER'S DAY

Gentle hands that never weary toiling in love's
vineyard sweet,
Eyes that seem forever cheery when our eyes
they chance to meet,
Tender, patient, brave, devoted, this is always
mother's way.
Could her worth in gold be quoted as you think
of her to-day?

There shall never be another quite so tender,
quite so kind
As the patient little mother; nowhere on this
earth you'll find
Her affection duplicated; none so proud if you
are fine.
Could her worth be overstated? Not by any
words of mine.

Death stood near the hour she bore us, agony
was hers to know,
Yet she bravely faced it for us, smiling in her
time of woe;
Down the years how oft we've tried her, often
selfish, heedless, blind,
Yet with love alone to guide her she was never
once unkind.

Vain are all our tributes to her if in words
alone they dwell.
We must live the praises due her; there's no
other way to tell
Gentle mother that we love her. Would you say,
as you recall
All the patient service of her, you've been
worthy of it all?

DIVISION

You cannot gather every rose,
Nor every pleasure claim,
Nor bask in every breeze that blows,
Nor play in every game.

No millionaire could ever own
The world's supply of pearls,
And no man here has ever known
All of the pretty girls.

So take what joy may come your way,
And envy not your brothers;
Enjoy your share of fun each day,
And leave the rest for others.

A MAN

A man doesn't whine at his losses.
A man doesn't whimper and fret,
Or rail at the weight of his crosses
And ask life to rear him a pet.
A man doesn't grudgingly labor
Or look upon toil as a blight;
A man doesn't sneer at his neighbor
Or sneak from a cause that is right.

A man doesn't sulk when another
Succeeds where his efforts have failed;
Doesn't keep all his praise for the brother
Whose glory is publicly hailed;
And pass by the weak and the humble
As though they were not of his clay;
A man doesn't ceaselessly grumble
When things are not going his way.

A man looks on woman as tender
And gentle, and stands at her side
At all times to guard and defend her,
And never to scorn or deride.
A man looks on life as a mission.
To serve, just so far as he can;
A man holds his noblest ambition
On earth is to live as a man.

A VOW

I might not ever scale the mountain heights
Where all the great men stand in glory now;
I may not ever gain the world's delights
Or win a wreath of laurel for my brow;
I may not gain the victories that men
Are fighting for, nor do a thing to boast of;
I may not get a fortune here, but then,
The little that I have I'll make the most of.

I'll make my little home a palace fine,
My little patch of green a garden fair,
And I shall know each humble plant and vine
As rich men know their orchid blossoms rare.
My little home may not be much to see;
Its chimneys may not tower far above;
But it will be a mansion great to me,
For in its walls I'll keep a hoard of love.

I will not pass my modest pleasures by
To grasp at shadows of more splendid things,
Disdaining what of joyousness is nigh
Because I am denied the joy of kings.
But I will laugh and sing my way along,
I'll make the most of what is mine to-day,
And if I never rise above the throng,
I shall have lived a full life anyway.

TREASURES

Some folks I know, when friends drop in
To visit for awhile and chin,
Just lead them round the rooms and halls
And show them pictures on their walls,
And point to rugs and tapestries
The works of men across the seas:
Their loving cups they show with pride,
To eyes that soon are stretching wide
With wonder at the treasures rare
That have been bought and gathered there.

But when folks come to call on me,
I've no such things for them to see.
No picture on my walls is great;
I have no ancient family plate;
No tapestry of rare design
Or costly woven rugs are mine;
I have no loving cup to show,
Or strange and valued curio;
But if my treasures they would see,
I bid them softly follow me.

And then I lead them up the stairs
Through trains of cars and Teddy bears,
And to a little room we creep
Where both my youngsters lie asleep,
Close locked in one another's arms.
I let them gaze upon their charms,

I let them see the legs of brown
Curled up beneath a sleeping gown,
And whisper in my happiness:
"Behold the treasures I possess."

CHALLENGE

Life is a challenge to the bold,
  It flings its gauntlet down
And bids us, if we seek for gold
  And glory and renown,
To come and *take* them from its store,
It will not meekly hand them o'er.

Life is a challenge all must meet,
  And nobly must we dare;
Its gold is tawdry when we cheat,
  Its fame a bitter snare
If it be stolen from life's clutch;
Men must be true to prosper much.

Life is a challenge and its laws
  Are rigid ones and stern;
The splendid joy of real applause
  Each man must nobly earn.
It makes us win its jewels rare,
But gives us paste, if we're unfair.

A TOAST TO HAPPINESS

To happiness I raise my glass,
  The goal of every human,
The hope of every clan and class
  And every man and woman.
The daydreams of the urchin there,
The sweet theme of the maiden's prayer,
  The strong man's one ambition,
The sacred prize of mothers sweet,
The tramp of soldiers on the street
  Have all the selfsame mission.
Life here is nothing more nor less
Than just a quest for happiness.

Some seek it on the mountain top,
  And some within a mine;
The widow in her notion shop
  Expects its sun to shine.
The tramp that seeks new roads to fare,
Is one with king and millionaire
  In this that each is groping
On different roads, in different ways,
To come to glad, contented days,
  And shares the common hoping.
The sound of martial fife and drum
Is born of happiness to come.

Yet happiness is always here
  Had we the eyes to see it;
No breast but holds a fund of cheer
  Had man the will to free it.
'Tis there upon the mountain top,
Or in the widow's notion shop,
  'Tis found in homes of sorrow;
'Tis woven in the memories
Of happier, brighter days than these,
  The gift, not of to-morrow
But of to-day, and in our tears
Some touch of happiness appears.

'Tis not a joy that's born of wealth:
  The poor man may possess it.
'Tis not alone the prize of health:
  No sickness can repress it.
'Tis not the end of mortal strife,
The sunset of the day of life,
  Or but the old should find it;
It is the bond twixt God and man,
The touch divine in all we plan,
  And has the soul behind it.
And so this toast to happiness,
The seed of which we all possess.

GUESSING TIME

It's guessing time at our house; every evening
after tea
We start guessing what old Santa's going to
leave us on our tree.
Everyone of us holds secrets that the others try
to steal,
And that eyes and lips are plainly having trouble
to conceal.
And a little lip that quivered just a bit the other
night
Was a sad and startling warning that I mustn't
guess it right.

"Guess what you will get for Christmas!" is the
cry that starts the fun.
And I answer: "Give the letter with which the
name's begun."
Oh, the eyes that dance around me and the joy-
ous faces there
Keep me nightly guessing wildly: "Is it some-
thing I can wear?"
I implore them all to tell me in a frantic sort
of way
And pretend that I am puzzled, just to keep them
feeling gay.

Oh, the wise and knowing glances that across the table fly
And the winks exchanged with mother, that they think I never spy;
Oh, the whispered confidences that are poured into her ear,
And the laughter gay that follows when I try my best to hear!
Oh, the shouts of glad derision when I bet that it's a cane,
And the merry answering chorus: "No, it's not. Just guess again!"

It's guessing time at our house, and the fun is running fast,
And I wish somehow this contest of delight could always last,
For the love that's in their faces and their laughter ringing clear
Is their dad's most precious present when the Christmas time is near.
And soon as it is over, when the tree is bare and plain,
I shall start in looking forward to the time to guess again.

UNDERSTANDING

When I was young and frivolous and never
stopped to think,
When I was always doing wrong, or just upon
the brink;
When I was just a lad of seven and eight and
nine and ten,
It seemed to me that every day I got in trouble
then,
And strangers used to shake their heads and say
I was no good,
But father always stuck to me — it seems he
understood.

I used to have to go to him 'most every night
and say
The dreadful things that I had done to worry
folks that day.
I know I didn't mean to be a turmoil round the
place,
And with the womenfolks about forever in dis-
grace;
To do the way they said I should, I tried the
best I could,
But though they scolded me a lot — my father
understood.

He never seemed to think it queer that I should risk my bones,
Or fight with other boys at times, or pelt a cat with stones;
An' when I'd break a window pane, it used to make him sad,
But though the neighbors said I was, he never thought me bad;
He never whipped me, as they used to say to me he should;
That boys can't always do what's right — it seemed he understood.

Now there's that little chap of mine, just full of life and fun,
Comes up to me with solemn face to tell the bad he's done.
It's natural for any boy to be a roguish elf,
He hasn't time to stop and think and figure for himself,
And though the womenfolks insist that I should take a hand,
They've never been a boy themselves, and they don't understand.

Some day I've got to go up there, and make a sad report

And tell the Father of us all where I have fallen
short;
And there will be a lot of wrong I never meant
to do,
A lot of smudges on my sheet that He will have
to view.
And little chance for heavenly bliss, up there,
will I command,
Unless the Father smiles and says: "My boy,
I understand."

PEOPLE LIKED HIM

People liked him, not because
He was rich or known to fame;
He had never won applause
As a star in any game.
His was not a brilliant style,
His was not a forceful way,
But he had a gentle smile
And a kindly word to say.

Never arrogant or proud,
On he went with manner mild;
Never quarrelsome or loud,
Just as simple as a child;
Honest, patient, brave and true:
Thus he lived from day to day,
Doing what he found to do
In a cheerful sort of way.

Wasn't one to boast of gold
Or belittle it with sneers,
Didn't change from hot to cold,
Kept his friends throughout the years,
Sort of man you like to meet
Any time or any place.
There was always something sweet
And refreshing in his face.

Sort of man you'd like to be:
Balanced well and truly square;
Patient in adversity,
Generous when his skies were fair.
Never lied to friend or foe,
Never rash in word or deed,
Quick to come and slow to go
In a neighbor's time of need.

Never rose to wealth or fame,
Simply lived, and simply died,
But the passing of his name
Left a sorrow, far and wide.
Not for glory he'd attained,
Nor for what he had of pelf,
Were the friends that he had gained,
But for what he was himself.

WHEN FATHER SHOOK THE STOVE

'Twas not so many years ago,
Say, twenty-two or three,
When zero weather or below
Held many a thrill for me.
Then in my icy room I slept
A youngster's sweet repose,
And always on my form I kept
My flannel underclothes.
Then I was roused by sudden shock
Though still to sleep I strove,
I knew that it was seven o'clock
When father shook the stove.

I never heard him quit his bed
Or his alarm clock ring;
I never heard his gentle tread,
Or his attempts to sing;
The sun that found my window pane
On me was wholly lost,
Though many a sunbeam tried in vain
To penetrate the frost.
To human voice I never stirred,
But deeper down I dove
Beneath the covers, when I heard
My father shake the stove.

To-day it all comes back to me
And I can hear it still;
He seemed to take a special glee
In shaking with a will.
He flung the noisy dampers back,
Then rattled steel on steel,
Until the force of his attack
The building seemed to feel.
Though I'd a youngster's heavy eyes
All sleep from them he drove;
It seemed to me the dead must rise
When father shook the stove.

Now radiators thump and pound
And every room is warm,
And modern men new ways have found
To shield us from the storm.
The window panes are seldom glossed
The way they used to be;
The pictures left by old Jack Frost
Our children never see.
And now that he has gone to rest
In God's great slumber grove,
I often think those days were best
When father shook the stove.

HOUSE-HUNTING

Time was when spring returned we went
To find another home to rent;
We wanted fresher, cleaner walls,
And bigger rooms and wider halls,
And open plumbing and the dome
That made the fashionable home.

But now with spring we want to sell,
And seek a finer place to dwell.
Our thoughts have turned from dens and domes;
We want the latest thing in homes;
To life we'll not be reconciled
Until we have a bathroom tiled.

A butler's pantry we desire,
Although no butler do we hire;
Nell's life will be one round of gloom
Without a closet for the broom,
And mine will dreary be and sour
Unless the bathroom has a shower.

For months and months we've sat and dreamed
Of paneled walls and ceilings beamed
And built-in cases for the books,
An attic room to be the cook's.
No house will she consent to view
Unless it has a sun room, too.

There must be wash bowls here and there
To save much climbing of the stair;
A sleeping porch we both demand —
This fad has swept throughout the land —
And, Oh, 'twill give her heart a wrench
Not to possess a few doors, French.

I want to dig and walk around
At least full fifty feet of ground;
She wants the latest style in tubs;
I want more room for trees and shrubs,
And a garage, with light and heat,
That can be entered from the street.

The trouble is the things we seek
Cannot be bought for ten-a-week.
And all the joys for which we sigh
Are just too rich for us to buy.
We have the taste to cut a dash:
The thing we're lacking most is cash.

AN EASY WORLD

It's an easy world to live in if you choose to
make it so;
You never need to suffer, save the griefs that
all must know;
If you'll stay upon the level and will do the
best you can
You will never lack the friendship of a kindly
fellow man.

Life's an easy road to travel if you'll only walk
it straight;
There are many here to help you in your little
bouts with fate;
When the clouds begin to gather and your hopes
begin to fade,
If you've only toiled in honor you won't have
to call for aid.

But if you've bartered friendship and the faith
on which it rests
For a temporary winning; if you've cheated in
the tests,
If with promises you've broken, you have chilled
the hearts of men;
It is vain to look for friendship for it will not
come again.

Oh, the world is full of kindness, thronged with men who want to be
Of some service to their neighbors and they'll run to you or me
When we're needing their assistance if we've lived upon the square,
But they'll spurn us in our trouble if we've always been unfair.

It's an easy world to live in; all you really need to do
Is the decent thing and proper and then friends will flock to you;
But let dishonor trail you and some stormy day you'll find
To your heart's supremest sorrow that you've made the world unkind.

There is no star within the flag
That's brighter than its brothers,
And when of Michigan I brag,
I'm boasting of the others.
Just which is which no man can say —
One star for every state
Gleams brightly on our flag to-day,
And every one is great.

The stars that gem the skies at night
May differ in degree,
And some are pale and some are bright,
But in our flag we see
A sky of blue wherein the stars
Are equal in design;
Each has the radiance of Mars
And all are yours and mine.

The glory that is Michigan's
Is Colorado's too;
The same sky Minnesota spans,
The same sun warms it through;
And all are one beneath the flag,
A common hope is ours;
Our country is the mountain crag,
The valley and its flowers.

The land we love lies far away
  As well as close at hand;
He has no vision who would say:
  This state's my native land.
Though sweet the charms he knows the best,
  Deep down within his heart
The farthest east, the farthest west
  Of him must be a part.

There is no star within the flag
  That's brighter than its brothers;
So when of Michigan I brag
  I'm boasting of the others.
We share alike one purpose true;
  One common end awaits;
We must in all we dream or do
  Remain *United* States.

THE OBLIGATION OF FRIENDSHIP

You ought to be fine for the sake of the folks
Who think you are fine.
If others have faith in you doubly you're bound
To stick to the line.
It's not only on you that dishonor descends:
You can't hurt yourself without hurting your friends.

You ought to be true for the sake of the folks
Who believe you are true.
You never should stoop to a deed that your friends
Think you wouldn't do.
If you're false to yourself, be the blemish but small,
You have injured your friends; you've been false to them all.

For friendship, my boy, is a bond between men
That is founded on truth:
It believes in the best of the ones that it loves,
Whether old man or youth;
And the stern rule it lays down for me and for you
Is to be what our friends think we are, through and through.

UNDER THE SKIN OF MEN

Did you ever sit down and talk with men
In a serious sort of a way,
On their views of life and ponder then
On all that they have to say?
If not, you should in some quiet hour;
It's a glorious thing to do:
For you'll find that back of the pomp and power
Most men have a goal in view.

They'll tell you then that their aim is not
The clink of the yellow gold;
That not in the worldly things they've got
Would they have their stories told.
They'll say the joys that they treasure most
Are their good friends, tried and true,
And an honest name for their own to boast
And peace when the day is through.

I've talked with men and I think I know
What's under the toughened skin.
I've seen their eyes grow bright and glow
With the fire that burns within.
And back of the gold and back of the fame
And back of the selfish strife,
In most men's breasts you'll find the flame
Of the nobler things of life.

THE FINER THOUGHT

How fine it is at night to say:
"I have not wronged a soul to-day.
I have not by a word or deed,
In any breast sowed anger's seed,
Or caused a fellow being pain;
Nor is there on my crest a stain
That shame has left. In honor's way,
With head erect, I've lived this day."

When night slips down and day departs
And rest returns to weary hearts,
How fine it is to close the book
Of records for the day, and look
Once more along the traveled mile
And find that all has been worth while;
To say: "In honor I have toiled;
My plume is spotless and unsoiled."

Yet cold and stern a man may be
Retaining his integrity;
And he may pass from day to day
A spirit dead, in living clay,
Observing strictly morals, laws,
Yet serving but a selfish cause;
So it is not enough to say:
"I have not stooped to shame to-day!"

It is a finer, nobler thought
When day is done and night has brought
The contemplative hours and sweet,
And rest to weary hearts and feet,
If man can stand in truth and say:
"I have been useful here to-day.
Back there is one I chanced to see
With hope newborn because of me.

"This day in honor I have toiled;
My shining crest is still unsoiled,
But on the mile I leave behind
Is one who says that I was kind;
And someone hums a cheerful song
Because I chanced to come along."
Sweet rest at night that man shall own
Who has not lived his day alone.

STUCK

I'm up against it day by day,
  My ignorance is distressing;
The things I don't know on the way
  I'm busily confessing.
Time was I used to think I knew
  Some useful bits of knowledge
And could be sure of one or two
  Real facts I'd gleaned in college.
But I'm unfitted for the task
Of answering things my boy can ask.

Now, who can answer queries queer
  That four-year-olds can think up?
And tell in simple phrase and clear
  Why fishes do not drink up
The water in the streams and lakes,
  Or where the wind is going,
And tell exactly how God makes
  The roses that are growing?
I'm sure I cannot satisfy
Each little when, and how, and why.

Had I the wisdom of a sage
  Possessed of all the learning
That can be gleaned from printed page
  From bookworm's closest turning,
That eager knowledge-seeking lad
  That questions me so gayly

Could still go round and boast he had
With queries floored me daily.
He'll stick, I'll bet, in less than five
Brief minutes any man alive.

ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP

Who once has had a friend has found
The link 'twixt mortal and divine;
Though now he sleeps in hallowed ground,
He lives in memory's sacred shrine;
And there he freely moves about,
A spirit that has quit the clay,
And in the times of stress and doubt
Sustains his friend throughout the day.

No friend we love can ever die;
The outward form but disappears;
I know that all my friends are nigh
Whenever I am moved to tears.
And when my strength and hope are gone,
The friends, no more, that once I knew,
Return to cheer and urge me on
Just as they always used to do.

They whisper to me in the dark
Kind words of counsel and of cheer;
When hope has flickered to a spark
I feel their gentle spirits near.

And Oh! because of them I strive
With all the strength that I can call
To keep their friendship still alive
And to be worthy of them all.

Death does not end our friendships true;
We all are debtors to the dead;
There, wait on everything we do
The splendid souls who've gone ahead.
To them I hold that we are bound
By double pledges to be fine.
Who once has had a friend has found
The link 'twixt mortal and divine.

FAITH

I believe in the world and its bigness and splendor:
That most of the hearts beating round us are tender;
That days are but footsteps and years are but miles
That lead us to beauty and singing and smiles:
That roses that blossom and toilers that plod
Are filled with the glorious spirit of God.

I believe in the purpose of everything living:
That taking is but the forerunner of giving;

That strangers are friends that we some day
may meet;
And not all the bitter can equal the sweet;
That creeds are but colors, and no man has
said
That God loves the yellow rose more than the
red.

I believe in the path that to-day I am treading,
That I shall come safe through the dangers I'm
dreading;
That even the scoffer shall turn from his ways
And some day be won back to trust and to
praise;
That the leaf on the tree and the thing we call
Man
Are sharing alike in His infinite plan.

I believe that all things that are living and
breathing
Some richness of beauty to earth are bequeath-
ing;
That all that goes out of this world leaves
behind
Some duty accomplished for mortals to find;
That the humblest of creatures our praise is
deserving,
For it, with the wisest, the Master is serving.

I

Nobody hates me more than I;
No enemy have I to-day
That I so bravely must defy;
There are no foes along my way,
However bitter they may be,
So powerful to injure me
As I am, nor so quick to spoil
The beauty of my bit of toil.

Nobody harms me more than I;
No one is meaner unto me;
Of all the foes that pass me by
I am the worst one that I see.
I am the dangerous man to fear;
I am the cause of sorrow here;
Of all men 'gainst my hopes inclined
I am myself the most unkind.

I do more harmful things to me
Than all the men who seem to hate;
I am the fellow that should be
More dreaded than the works of fate.
I am the one that I must fight
With all my will and all my might;
My foes are better friends to me
Than I have ever proved to be.

I am the careless foe and mean;
I am the selfish rival too;
My enmity to me is seen
In almost everything I do.
More courage it requires to beat
Myself, than all the foes I meet;
I am more traitorous to me
Than other men could ever be.

In every struggle I have lost
I am the one that was to blame;
My weaknesses cannot be glossed
By glib excuses. I was lame.
I that would dare for fame or pelf
Am far less daring with myself.
I care not who my foes may be,
I am my own worst enemy.

THE THINGS THAT HAVEN'T BEEN DONE BEFORE

The things that haven't been done before,
Those are the things to try;
Columbus dreamed of an unknown shore
At the rim of the far-flung sky,
And his heart was bold and his faith was strong
As he ventured in dangers new,
And he paid no heed to the jeering throng
Or the fears of the doubting crew.

The many will follow the beaten track
With guideposts on the way,
They live and have lived for ages back
With a chart for every day.
Someone has told them it's safe to go
On the road he has traveled o'er,
And all that they ever strive to know
Are the things that were known before.

A few strike out, without map or chart,
Where never a man has been,
From the beaten paths they draw apart
To see what no man has seen.
There are deeds they hunger alone to do;
Though battered and bruised and sore,
They blaze the path for the many, who
Do nothing not done before.

The things that haven't been done before
Are the tasks worth while to-day;
Are you one of the flock that follows, or
Are you one that shall lead the way?
Are you one of the timid souls that quail
At the jeers of a doubting crew,
Or dare you, whether you win or fail,
Strike out for a goal that's new?

REVENGE

If I had hatred in my heart toward my fellow man,
If I were pressed to do him ill, to conjure up a plan
To wound him sorely and to rob his days of all their joy,
I'd wish his wife would go away and take their little boy.

I'd waste no time on curses vague, nor try to take his gold,
Nor seek to shatter any plan that he might dearly hold.
A crueler revenge than that for him I would bespeak:
I'd wish his wife and little one might leave him for a week.

I'd wish him all the loneliness that comes with
loss of those
Who fill his life with laughter and contentment
and repose.
I'd wish him empty rooms at night and mocking
stairs to squeak
That neither wife nor little boy will greet him
for a week.

If I despised my fellow man, I'd make my
hatred known
By wishing him a week or two of living all
alone;
I'd let him know the torture that is mine to
bear to-day,
For Buddy and his mother now are miles and
miles away.

PROMOTION

Promotion comes to him who sticks
Unto his work and never kicks,
Who watches neither clock nor sun
To tell him when his task is done;
Who toils not by a stated chart,
Defining to a jot his part,
But gladly does a little more
Than he's remunerated for.

The man, in factory or shop,
Who rises quickly to the top,
Is he who gives what can't be bought:
Intelligent and careful thought.

No one can say just when begins
The service that promotion wins,
Or when it ends; 'tis not defined
By certain hours or any kind
Of system that has been devised;
Merit cannot be systemized.
It is at work when it's at play;
It serves each minute of the day;
'Tis always at its post, to see
New ways of help and use to be.
Merit from duty never slinks,
Its cardinal virtue is — it thinks!

Promotion comes to him who tries
Not solely for a selfish prize,
But day by day and year by year
Holds his employer's interests dear.
Who measures not by what he earns
The sum of labor he returns,
Nor counts his day of toiling through
Till he's done all that he can do.
His strength is not of muscle bred,
But of the heart and of the head.
The man who would the top attain
Must demonstrate he has a brain.

EXPECTATION

Most folks, as I've noticed, in pleasure an' strife,
Are always expecting too much out of life.
They wail an' they fret
Just because they don't get
The best o' the sunshine, the fairest o' flowers,
The finest o' features, the strongest o' powers;
They whine an' they whimper an' curse an' condemn,
Coz life isn't always bein' partial to them.

Notwithstandin' the pain an' the sufferin' they see,
They cling to the notion that they should go free:
That they shouldn't share
In life's trouble an' care
But should always be happy an' never perplexed,
An' never discouraged or beaten or vexed.
When life treats 'em roughly an' jolts 'em with care,
They seem to imagine it's bein' unfair.

It's a curious notion folks hold in their pride,
That their souls should never be tested or tried;
That others must mourn
An' be sick an' forlorn

An' stand by the biers of their loved ones an' weep,
But life from such sorrows their bosoms must keep.
Oh, they mustn't know what it means to be sad,
Or they'll wail that the treatment they're gettin' is bad.

Now life as I view it means pleasure an' pain,
An' laughter an' weepin' an' sunshine an' rain,
An' takin' an' givin';
An' all who are livin'
Must face it an' bear it the best that they can
Believin' great Wisdom is workin' the plan.
An' no one should ever complain it's unfair
Because at the moment he's tastin' despair.

HARD WORK

One day, in ages dark and dim,
A toiler, weary, worn and faint,
Who found his task too much for him,
Gave voice unto a sad complaint.
And seeking emphasis to give
Unto his trials (day ill-starred!)
Coupled to "work" this adjective,
This little word of terror: *Hard.*

And from that day to this has work
Its frightening description worn;
'Tis spoken daily by the shirk,
The first cloud on the sky at morn.
To-day when there are tasks to do,
Save that we keep ourselves on guard
With fearful doubtings them we view,
And think and speak of them as hard.

That little but ill-chosen word
Has wrought great havoc with men's souls,
Has chilled the hearts ambition stirred
And held the pass to splendid goals.
Great dreams have faded and been lost,
Fine youth by it been sadly marred
As plants beneath a withering frost,
Because men thought and whispered: "Hard."

Let's think of work in terms of hope
And speak of it with words of praise,
And tell the joy it is to grope
Along the new, untrodden ways!
Let's break this habit of despair
And cheerfully our task regard;
The road to happiness lies there:
Why think or speak of it as hard?

GRATITUDE

Be grateful for the kindly friends that walk
along your way;
Be grateful for the skies of blue that smile
from day to day;
Be grateful for the health you own, the work
you find to do,
For round about you there are men less fortu-
nate than you.

Be grateful for the growing trees, the roses
soon to bloom,
The tenderness of kindly hearts that shared your
days of gloom;
Be grateful for the morning dew, the grass
beneath your feet,
The soft caresses of your babes and all their
laughter sweet.

Acquire the grateful habit, learn to see how blest
you are,
How much there is to gladden life, how little
life to mar!
And what if rain shall fall to-day and you with
grief are sad;
Be grateful that you can recall the joys that
you have had.

A REAL MAN

Men are of two kinds, and he
Was of the kind I'd like to be.
Some preach their virtues, and a few
Express their lives by what they do.
That sort was he. No flowery phrase
Or glibly spoken words of praise
Won friends for him. He wasn't cheap
Or shallow, but his course ran deep,
And it was pure. You know the kind.
Not many in a life you find
Whose deeds outrun their words so far
That more than what they seem they are.

There are two kinds of lies as well:
The kind you live, the ones you tell.
Back through his years from age to youth
He never acted one untruth.
Out in the open light he fought
And didn't care what others thought
Nor what they said about his fight
If he believed that he was right.
The only deeds he ever hid
Were acts of kindness that he did.

What speech he had was plain and blunt.
His was an unattractive front.
Yet children loved him; babe and boy
Played with the strength he could employ,

Without one fear, and they are fleet
To sense injustice and deceit.
No back door gossip linked his name
With any shady tale of shame.
He did not have to compromise
With evil-doers, shrewd and wise,
And let them ply their vicious trade
Because of some past escapade.

Men are of two kinds, and he
Was of the kind I'd like to be.
No door at which he ever knocked
Against his manly form was locked.
If ever man on earth was free
And independent, it was he.
No broken pledge lost him respect,
He met all men with head erect,
And when he passed I think there went
A soul to yonder firmament
So white, so splendid and so fine
It came almost to God's design.

THE NEIGHBORLY MAN

Some are eager to be famous, some are striving
to be great,
Some are toiling to be leaders of their nation
or their state,
And in every man's ambition, if we only under-
stood,
There is much that's fine and splendid; every
hope is mostly good.
So I cling unto the notion that contented I
will be
If the men upon life's pathway find a needed
friend in me.

I rather like to putter 'round the walks and
yards of life,
To spray at night the roses that are burned and
browned with strife;
To eat a frugal dinner, but always to have a
chair
For the unexpected stranger that my simple
meal would share.
I don't care to be a traveler, I would rather be
the one
Sitting calmly by the roadside helping weary
travelers on.

I'd like to be a neighbor in the good old-fashioned way,
Finding much to do for others, but not over much to say.
I like to read the papers, but I do not yearn to see
What the journal of the morning has been moved to say of me;
In the silences and shadows I would live my life and die
And depend for fond remembrance on some grateful passers-by.

I guess I wasn't fashioned for the brilliant things of earth,
Wasn't gifted much with talent or designed for special worth,
But was just sent here to putter with life's little odds and ends
And keep a simple corner where the stirring highway bends,
And if folks should chance to linger, worn and weary through the day,
To do some needed service and to cheer them on their way.

ROSES

When God first viewed the rose He'd made
He smiled, and thought it passing fair;
Upon the bloom His hands He laid,
And gently blessed each petal there.
He summoned in His artists then
And bade them paint, as ne'er before,
Each petal, so that earthly men
Might love the rose for evermore.

With Heavenly brushes they began
And one with red limned every leaf,
To signify the love of man;
The first rose, white, betokened grief;
"My rose shall deck the bride," one said
And so in pink he dipped his brush,
"And it shall smile beside the dead
To typify the faded blush."

And then they came unto His throne
And laid the roses at His feet,
The crimson bud, the bloom full blown,
Filling the air with fragrance sweet.
"Well done, well done!" the Master spake;
"Henceforth the rose shall bloom on earth:
One fairer blossom I will make,"
And then a little babe had birth.

On earth a loving mother lay
Within a rose-decked room and smiled,
But from the blossoms turned away
To gently kiss her little child,
And then she murmured soft and low,
"For beauty, here, a mother seeks.
None but the Master made, I know,
The roses in a baby's cheeks."

THE JUNK BOX

My father often used to say:
"My boy don't throw a thing away:
You'll find a use for it some day."

So in a box he stored up things,
Bent nails, old washers, pipes and rings,
And bolts and nuts and rusty springs.

Despite each blemish and each flaw,
Some use for everything he saw;
With things material, this was law.

And often when he'd work to do,
He searched the junk box through and through
And found old stuff as good as new.

And I have often thought since then,
That father did the same with men;
He knew he'd need their help again.

It seems to me he understood
That men, as well as iron and wood,
May broken be and still be good.

Despite the vices he'd display
He never threw a man away,
But kept him for another day.

A human junk box is this earth
And into it we're tossed at birth,
To wait the day we'll be of worth.

Though bent and twisted, weak of will,
And full of flaws and lacking skill,
Some service each can render still.

THE BOY THAT WAS

When the hair about the temples starts to show
the signs of gray,
And a fellow realizes that he's wandering far
away
From the pleasures of his boyhood and his
youth, and never more
Will know the joy of laughter as he did in days
of yore,

Oh, it's then he starts to thinking of a stubby
little lad
With a face as brown as berries and a soul
supremely glad.

When a gray-haired dreamer wanders down the
lanes of memory
And forgets the living present for the time of
"used-to-be,"
He takes off his shoes and stockings, and he
throws his coat away,
And he's free from all restrictions, save the rules
of manly play.
He may be in richest garments, but bareheaded
in the sun
He forgets his proud successes and the riches
he has won.

Oh, there's not a man alive but that would give
his all to be
The stubby little fellow that in dreamland he
can see,
And the splendors that surround him and the
joys about him spread
Only seem to rise to taunt him with the boyhood
that has fled.
When the hair about the temples starts to show
Time's silver stain,
Then the richest man that's living yearns to be
a boy again.

AS FALL THE LEAVES

As fall the leaves, so drop the days
  In silence from the tree of life;
Born for a little while to blaze
  In action in the heat of strife,
And then to shrivel with Time's blast
And fade forever in the past.

In beauty once the leaf was seen;
  To all it offered gentle shade;
Men knew the splendor of its green
  That cheered them so, would quickly fade:
And quickly, too, must pass away
All that is splendid of to-day.

To try to keep the leaves were vain:
  Men understand that they must fall;
Why should they bitterly complain
  When sorrows come to one and all?
Why should they mourn the passing day
That must depart along the way?

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

A man doesn't whine at his losses..... 142
A man must earn his hour of peace..... 109
Are you fond of your wife and your children 57
As fall the leaves, so drop the days..... 188
A smudge on his nose and a smear on his cheek 13
A table cloth that's slightly soiled..... 118
A touch of the plain and the prairie..... 96
At Sugar Camp the cook is kind..... 26

Be a friend. You don't need money..... 97
Before we take an auto ride Pa says to Ma. 22
Be grateful for the kindly friends..... 179
Be more than his dad..... 128

Can't is the worst word that's written..... 52
Cheek that is tanned by the wind of the north 59
Courage isn't a brilliant dash..... 72

Did you ever sit down and talk with men.. 163
Does the grouch get richer quicker..... 14

Foxes can talk if you know how to listen.... 80
Full many a time a thought has come..... 103

Gentle hands that never weary..... 140
God grant me kindly thought..... 121

He little knew the sorrow that was in his vacant chair..... 24
He spent what he made, or he gave it away 124
He was going to be all that a mortal should 120
He wiped his shoes before his door..... 132
How do you tackle your work each day..... 62
How fine it is at night to say..... 164
"How much do babies cost?" said he..... 18

I am selfish in my wishin' every sort o' joy. 20
I believe in the world..... 168
I'd like to be a boy again..... 16
I'd like to be the sort of friend..... 32
I'd like to be the sort of man..... 112
I'd like to leave but daffodills..... 75
I do not say new friends are not considerate 34
I do not think all failure's undeserved..... 77
If I had hatred in my heart..... 173
If never a sorrow came to us..... 85
I might not ever scale the mountain heights 143
I'm not the man to say that failure's sweet. 43
I'm the bumps and bruises doctor..... 107
I'm up against it day by day..... 166
I never knew, until they went..... 49
It's an easy world to live in if you choose.. 158
It's coming time for planting..... 44
It's guessing time at our house..... 148
It's September, and the orchards are afire.. 60
It's the dull road that leads to the gay road 67
It's tough when you are homesick..... 117
It takes a heap o' livin' in a house to make it home 28
I've sipped a rich man's sparkling wine..... 74
I've told about the times that Ma can't find her pocketbook..... 94

Lady in the show case carriage..... 122
Less hate and greed..... 58
Let others sing their songs of war..... 82
Life is a challenge to the bold..... 145
Life is a gift to be used every day..... 63
Little Master Mischievous, that's the name. 38

Ma has a dandy little book..... 100
Ma says no, it's too much care..... 116
Men are of two kind, and he..... 180
Most every night when they're in bed..... 64

Most folks, as I've noticed, in pleasure an' strife 176
My father often used to say..... 185
My Pa he eats his breakfast..... 50

Never a sigh for the cares that she bore.... 19
Nobody hates me more than I..... 170
None knows the day that friends must part 33
No one is beat till he quits..... 111
Not for the sake of the gold..... 93

One day, in ages dim and dark..... 177
Only a dad with a tired face..... 42

Pa's not so very big or brave..... 108
People liked him, not because..... 152
Promotion comes to him who sticks..... 174

Right must not live in idleness..... 85

She is fair to see and sweet..... 130
So long as men shall be on earth..... 39
Some are eager to be famous..... 182
Some folks leave home for money..... 70
Some folks I know, when friends drop in.. 144

Take home a smile; forget the petty cares.. 71
Thankful for the glory of the old Red, White and Blue..... 98
The happiest nights..... 110
The green is in the meadow..... 86
The kids are out-of-doors once more..... 104
The little path that leads to home..... 30
The man who wants a garden fair..... 56
There is no star within the flag..... 160
There must be great rejoicin' on the Golden Shore to-day..... 54
There's a heap of pent-up goodness..... 84
There's a lot of joy in the smiling world... 40
There's a wondrous smell of spices..... 66

There's nothing that builds up a toil-weary soul 102
There was a bear — his name was Jim..... 134
The skies are blue and the sun is out..... 78
The sumac's flaming scarlet..... 136
The things that haven't been done before... 172
The things that make a soldier great..... 114
The world's too busy now to pause..... 92
'Tis better to have tried in vain..... 83
To do your little bit of toil..... 133
To gentle ways I am inclined..... 90
To happiness I raise my glass 146
To live as gently as I can..... 15
Time was when spring returned we went.. 156
'Twas not so many years ago..... 154

Used to wonder just why father..... 46

We can be great by helping one another... 73
We was speakin' of folks, jes' common folks 36
When an apple tree is ready for the world.. 68
When God first viewed the rose He'd made. 184
When he was only nine months old..... 76
When I was young and frivolous..... 150
When Pa comes home, I'm at the door..... 138
"When shall I be a man?" he said..... 126
When the hair about the temples starts to show the signs of gray..... 186
When you get to know a fellow..... 11
Who does his task from day to day..... 91
Who has a troop of romping youth..... 21
Who once has had a friend has found..... 167

You cannot gather every rose..... 141
You can talk about your music..... 106
You do not know it, little man..... 88
You don't begrudge the labor..... 113
You ought to be fine for the sake of the folks 162

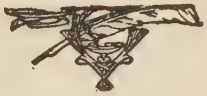
PART TWO

LIFE'S HIGHWAY

Life's Highway

By

Edgar A. Guest



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INDEX

POEM	PAGE
About Children	107
Achievement	117
Apple Tree	155
Apple Vendor, The	175
At Her Wedding	41
At the School Exercises	61
Autumn	83
Autumn Scene	133
Beauty	108
Because He Lived	44
Bi-Focal Trouble	103
Birch Tree, The	38
Black Sheep, The	84
Blue Spruce, The	21
Bread Line, The	50
Business of an Uncle, The	121
Careless	93
Carver, The	85
Change of Mind	35
Choice, The	19
Christmas Bit, A	32
Circus Memories	129
Courage	36
Creed	70
Cure for Sulks	95
Destiny	25
Determination	28
Difficulties	56
Doctor's Waiting Room	53

POEM PAGE

Dog, The 179
Drawback, The 76

Eclipse 173
Evening Smoke 119
Everlasting Flowers, The.....148

Family Prayer for Difficult Days..... 31
Farm Hand, The.....181
Father's Job, A.....157
Father's Problem 131
Fear 88
Fighter, The 43
First Tooth, The..... 82
Flower Courage 59
Friend, The 150

Garden Experience 123
Gift from Heaven.....151
Gladiolas 182
Grace at Table..... 96
Grumbling Soldier, The..... 99

Happiness 137
Happy Toad, The..... 37
Hello, Tulips 141
Home-Makers 51
Human Alarm Clock, The.....125

Incident 105
Indebted 143
Innocence 27

Joseph of Arimathea..... 71

Landlord and Tenant..... 98

POEM	PAGE
Layman, The	91
Life's Highway	15
Linen and Lace	111
Little Country Drug Store, The	145
Little Lady Riches	139
Lovely Smile, The	75
Love of Beauty	87
Making the Best of It	74
Marriages	130
Martins, The	101
Mice, Absolutely Free!	169
Neighboring	167
Noisy Place	89
November	60
Old and New Way, The	159
One Kindly Deed	17
Ordinary Folks, The	42
Paid in Advance	79
Parental Pride	97
Patience	113
Plain Road, The	166
Plant a Garden	47
Playing Father	77
Prayer	40
Prisoner at the Bar	165
Prodigal's Return, The	45
Proof of a Golfer, The	23
Proud Pheasant, The	138
Rabbits	153
Radio	132
Real People	67

POEM PAGE

Safe Golfer, The 55
St. Valentine 174
Score, The 29
Self-Importance 171
Service 20
Sleeping Child 115
Starting Out 63
Supper's Ready 73

Temptress, The 57
Ten-Year-Old 49
Those Duty Calls 109
Those First Long Trousers 135
Thought for the Brave 34
Tinsmith Goes Above, The 127
Trophies 149
True Delight 33
Tuffy 128
Twenty-five Years 69
Two Sentimentalists 183

Victim of Fear 186

Warning to Children 161
Washington 46
Wayward, The 185
Weariness 163
Wedding Plans 177
What Makes the Game 147
What's in It for Me? 81
When the Baby Arrives 66
Wisdom 114
Work of Summer, The 65

Zinnias 39

Life's Highway

'Tis good to walk life's highway wide,
Past cabin low and steeple,
And meet along the countryside
The smiling, friendly people.
For wheresoe'er a man may fare,
Though rough or smooth the mile is,
Or bright the day or dark and gray,
He'll come to where a smile is.

There's sorrow for the hearts of all
Before the journey closes;
But Junetime lines full many a wall
With pink and scarlet roses,
And overhead the blue skies spread
A canopy of splendor
'Neath which we fare, despite our care,
To welcomes warm and tender.

And be the highway short or long
Which stretches out before us,
Man's ear will catch the heartening song
Of thrush or robin chorus.

By stream and brook on scenes he'll look,
Illuming Nature's pages
To glad his eye as he goes by,
Repeated through the ages.

The poorest man a friend may find,
The richest man no truer;
For kings, whom soldiers march behind,
God's sky is made no bluer.
'Spite care and strife, the joys of life,
The beauties richly blended,
And sun and star and blossoms are
For all mankind intended.

One Kindly Deed

He went his way and never knew
How much his words had thrilled him through,
He'd merely stopped upon the street
To buy a newsboy's printed sheet
And something put it in his mind
That day to be a little kind.

"My boy, 'tis cold you look," said he.
"Your ears are red as they can be.
Just step in here, you bright-eyed chap,
I'll buy for you a winter cap,
And since all day you tread the street
I'll put new rubbers on your feet."

He never knew just why the whim
For such a kindness came to him,
But he was happy for the day
And whistling went upon his way;
Took train for home and never guessed
What seed he'd planted in a breast.

Day after day, year after year,
Watched one for him to re-appear.
The boy to manhood grown still scanned
The faces of the public, and
Cherished the hope that ere life's end
He'd meet once more his kindly friend.

They never met. But in his name
That boy when he a man became
On many a blustery, wintry day
Gave caps and overshoes away
In memory of the passing whim
Of one who'd been so kind to him.

The Choice

And one man said:
"All hope is dead
  And I wish that I were, too!
For rough is the way
And the skies are gray
  And I can't get work to do.
I've lost the things which I thought were mine,
And it's now no use for the sun to shine."

In similar straits,
Betrayed by the fates
  And stripped of his worldly gear,
Another man said:
"Well, I'm far from dead,
  And I don't want to die this year!
There's a lot proved false which I thought was true,
But I want to be here when the sun breaks through."

All men must choose
Of these opposite views,
  And it's easy enough to fail,
If you're willing to quit
You can argue for it
  With a truly deplorable tale,
But always the difficult thing to do
Is to stick to a problem and see it through.

Service

To prove their wisdom and their strength
They builded pyramids of old,
But long ere time had run its length
The things were stark and still and cold.

To God they raised both tower and spire,
And lavished on them wealth and skill,
Lit adoration's incense fire,
But round the steps are beggars still.

By tedious toil the stones were piled,
At frightful cost were temples made,
Yet many a mother of a child
Looks out on life and is afraid.

I wandered through the ruins grim
And in my mind the fancy ran
That God's best love must go to him
Who labors for his fellow-man.

The Blue Spruce

That Colorado spruce you see,
  Well, he's a friend o' mine,
For he's been growing old with me
  These last eight years or nine.
And every spring for my delight
  He dons a silver dress
And seems to add unto his height
  A foot or slightly less.

Some call him Colorado blue,
  With that I quarrel not.
I only know whate'er his hue
  I like his ways a lot.
Sturdy and straight and tall he stands
  Against what winds may blow,
And sometimes holds his arms and hands
  To catch the falling snow.

When our acquaintance first began
  I'm sure he looked at me
And wondered if I were a man
  Who could befriend a tree.
But as the weeks and months slipped by
  Such doubting was destroyed,
And under clear or stormy sky
  Each other we've enjoyed.

I never walk about the place
  But what I stop to chat.
Sometimes I tell him to his face,
  "Old boy, you're getting fat!"
And sometimes, in his friendly way,
  That spruce looks down on me.
"You're not as slim," he seems to say,
  "As once you used to be."

The Proof of a Golfer

The proof of the pudding's the eating, they say,
But the proof of a golfer is not
The number of strokes which he takes in a day
Or the skill he puts into a shot;
There is more to the game than the scores which you make,
Here's a truth which all golfers endorse;
You don't prove your worth by the shots which you take,
But the care which you take of the course.

A golfer is more than a ball-driving brute,
He is more than a mug-hunting czar;
To be known as a golfer you don't have to shoot
The course of your home club in par;
But you do have to love every blade of the grass,
Every inch of the fairways and greens,
And if you don't take care of the course as you pass
You are not what "a good golfer" means.

Just watch a good golfer some day when you're out
And behold what he does as he plays;
He never goes on leaving divots about,
Till the grass is put back—there he stays!

Observe him in traps as he stands for his shot,
Then note, when the ball has been played
That he never unthinkingly turns from the spot
Till he's covered the footprints he made.

You may brag of your scores and may boast of your skill,
You may think as a golfer you're good,
But if footprints you make in the traps you don't fill,
You don't love the game as you should;
For your attitude unto the sport you enjoy
Isn't proven by brilliance or force;
The proof of a golfer—now get this, my boy!
Is the care which he takes of the course.

Destiny

Who knows what lies behind us all
  That we who live to-day
Might train a rose along a wall
  And see our children play?

We cannot mark each deed or thought
  In some long vanished year
By which the present earth was wrought
  For us to labor here.

But all we find along our way
  To times by-gone we owe,
The world is as it is to-day,
  Because men made it so.

And since to-day must be the sum
  Of all that was before,
Our lives may hold what is to come
  When we shall be no more.

Blindly perforce the road we tread,
  And cope with good and ill
That one a thousand years ahead
  His little place may fill.

So strangely is God's purpose planned,
That none of us can see
Into the great uncharted land
Which men call destiny.

Now we are here and know not why,
The end, no man can say;
The answer to our lives may lie
Long centuries away.

Innocence

I think perhaps we'll never know
Just why the children charm us so,
But it may be, when gathered near
They never look on us to sneer
Or think of us as people queer.

They do not come some fault to find
Or seek for guile in motives kind,
They do not, as the wise and old,
Let friendship die and love grow cold
From tales some gossip may have told.

The charm of childhood must be this:
It's much too young for prejudice;
Too young to hate; too young to see
How frail the strongest man may be
Or question his integrity.

The children run to us as though
We grown-ups all were good to know.
Lacking the judgment or the sense
To think our faults of consequence,
They love us in their innocence.

Determination

I'll see it through, whate'er the danger be.
One death is all that God assigns to me.
I'll stand erect against the odds and shout:
"I may be whipped, but will not turn about!"

I will not play the coward! Fail I may,
But at the post of duty I will stay.
Nor dread of loss, nor fear of being hurt,
Nor softening pride shall tempt me to desert.

I'll play the man! What if the way seems long?
I will not whimper that all care is wrong.
Blunder I may, but none shall ever cry
I died a failure, since I would not try.

The Score

The youth who had the ball
Ran and dodged, eluding all
Who would bar his forward progress.
Him the people rose to cheer.
His the touchdown; his the glory,
His the headlines in the story,
For the people seldom notice
Those who keep the pathway clear,
But upon the board, it seems,
That boy's score becomes the team's.

Harvard, Michigan or Yale!
'Tis the scoreboard tells the tale.
Though to one lad go the cheering
And the plaudits and the songs,
When at last the goal is made
And the figures are displayed
It is plain to every member
Of the team that score belongs.
Every substitute out there
In that goal has had a share.

We have honored long, and will,
Individual strength and skill,
But who knows how many labor
That one great shall find his place,

And the score that is displayed
Of some progress man has made
In the end becomes the glory
Of the humblest of his race.
And the triumphs of the strong
At the last to all belong.

Family Prayer for Difficult Days

Lord, grant our little family
  The strength to bear life's tasks together;
Let us brave-hearted servants be,
  And give us faith for stormy weather;
Grant us the courage for our tasks,
Whatever toil the morning asks.

Lord, bless our happy circle small,
  Let neither care nor loss affright us.
Each evening when the shadows fall,
  May love and comradeship unite us.
Though steep the hill and rough the way,
Let us not grumble through the day.

Lord, keep us safe from greed and hate
  And all the shams which would destroy us;
Teach us against the whims of Fate
  To keep our hearts serene and joyous;
And when the evening comes, content,
Grant us to call the day well spent.

A Christmas Bit

If I were Santa Claus this year
I'd change his methods for the day;
I'd give to all the children here
But there are things I'd take away.

I'd enter every home to steal,
With giving I'd not be content.
I'd find the heart-aches men conceal
And take them with me when I went.

I'd rob the invalid of pain;
I'd steal the poor man's weight of care;
I'd take the prisoner's ball and chain
And every crime which sent him there.

I'd take the mother's fears away,
The doubts which often fret the wise—
And all should wake on Christmas Day
With happy hearts and shining eyes.

For old and young this is my prayer:
God bless us all this Christmas Day
And give us strength our tasks to bear,
And take our bitter griefs away!

True Delight

I know no greater joys than these:
  The laughter of a child,
The fragrance of the summer breeze,
  A home kept undefiled.

Books chosen from the crowds with care;
  Friends just as truly made,
The comfort of an earnest prayer,
  The games at evening played.

A patch of lawn, a garden small,
  And in the evening gloam
As the long twilight shadows fall
  A dog to wag you home.

Let great men ride their pompous way,
  Still must their souls be glum,
Unless at every close of day
  To these true joys they come.

Thought for the Brave

Take life as you find it,
With the great past all behind it
And a greater future waiting
For strong men to come along;
With its weight of hurt and sorrow
And perhaps some new to-morrow
That shall bring a joy to fruitage
Or shall right an ancient wrong.

Stand up to life and face it!
If the hour be good, embrace it!
If the hour be long and darksome
Brave the danger best you may;
For the warp of life is sadness
And the woof is made of gladness
And 'tis poor of mind the man is
Who wears threadbare week or day.

Tread life's road and never falter.
There is little sighs will alter.
For no man the weather changes
And for none will cares depart,
When the blow falls man must take it!
Life's what God and mortals make it—
So for pleasure's hour be grateful,
And for trial stout of heart.

Change of Mind

Time was with pride I used to say:
"I hope to leave him rich some day.
I hope he'll never know the cares
  Which I have had to bear."
And saying this, it seemed that I
Believed that when I came to die,
My rest would sweeter be to know
  My child was free from care.

To-day I know parental pride
Was dreaming on its foolish side,
And building pictures fair to see,
  But bitterly untrue.
Since when have sons to manhood grown
On private incomes of their own?
Since when have sons their merit proved
  Without a task to do?

And so no more I shout aloud
From motives filial and proud;
I want to save my boy from pain
  And doubt and loss and care.
No! No! My cry is this to-day:
I want to teach my boy the way
To stand to life and work and think
  And bravely do his share.

Courage

This is courage: to remain
Brave and patient under pain;
Cool and calm and firm to stay
In the presence of dismay;
Not to flinch when foes attack,
Even though you're beaten back;
Still to cling to what is right,
When the wrong possesses might.

This is courage: to be true
To the best men see in you;
To remember, tempest-tossed,
Not to whimper, "All is lost!"
But to battle to the end
While you still have strength to spend;
Not to cry that hope is gone
While you've life to carry on.

This is courage: to endure
Hurt and loss you cannot cure;
Patiently and undismayed,
Facing life still unafraid;
Glad to live and glad to take
Bravely for your children's sake,
Burdens they would have to bear
If you fled and ceased to care.

The Happy Toad

As I was walking down the road
I met an ugly, grinning toad,
Who squatted in the shade and said:
"I never wish that I were dead.
Wherever I may chance to stray
I find rich food along the way;
I have no dreams I can't fulfill;
I owe no other toad a bill;
In slimy places I abide,
But with them I am satisfied.
My little children I forsook
As tadpoles in a nearby brook;
I know not where they are nor care.
I have no burdens I must bear.
At night I never lie awake.
My bitterest enemy is the snake.
I have no taxes, no beliefs,
No cares, ambitions, hopes or griefs;
No clothes to buy, no cash to lose,
No tools that I must learn to use.
I sing no dirges, tell no jokes.
I'm just a jumping toad who croaks.
Contented, placid, happy I
Shall be until the day I die."

* * * *

Yet, as I trudged along the road,
I thought, "Who wants to be a toad?"

The Birch Tree

Out of a jutting rock, wind blown,
A birch tree braves the world alone.
A crevice in the granite first
Captured the seed; a wave immersed
That tiny embryo. The sun
Warmed it and thus was life begun.

Scant food the passing breezes give
And yet that tree contrives to live!
Cruel the clutch of granite gray,
Yet the brave roots from day to day
Into the great stone deeper creep,
A surer hold on life to keep.

Twisted and bent some limbs appear,
But still undaunted year by year
Those roots in cheerless channels sunk
Courageously support the trunk
And green against the lake and sky,
A birch tree catches every eye!

Man thinks he knows what nature wills.
But much he plants the winter kills,
While far away from human care
And on a cliff by storms swept bare,
Denied the commonest of needs,
A birch tree silently succeeds!

Zinnias

Old-fashioned Zinnias seem to me
  Like certain patient friends and true,
Who seek no words of flattery
  Nor any praise for what they do,
But are the first when sorrows fall
  With offerings of help to call.

Some friendships and some flowers appear
  Too pale and delicate to last.
Who loves them dwells in constant fear
  Of thoughtless word or icy blast.
The least contrary wind may end
  The fragile bloom or fragile friend.

But Zinnias have a sturdier way.
  No pampering from friends they ask.
Wherever planted they will stay
  And blithely go about their task.
Whatever winds or storms descend,
  On Zinnias you can depend.

Prayer

Strengthen us, Lord, that we may hold
The faith when winds blow bleak and cold!

We who have sat beneath the trees
And quaffed our sparkling drinks at ease;

Have known all comforts and delights,
Days of employment, restful nights,

Friendships and happy, blazing fires,
Contentment and fulfilled desires,

Found serving Thee an easy task
When there was little men could ask.

But now, Oh, Lord, our fires burn low,
The cold, harsh winds of failure blow,

Our needs are great! Good Lord, we pray:
Grant us the courage for the day,

The heart to struggle as we must,
The faith, though prostrate in the dust,

That we shall, braving care and doubt,
At last work mankind's problems out.

At Her Wedding

I came across 'em, by the stair,
Those two old women simpering there,
Sniffling, as if they both had colds,
And were a pair of nine-year olds.
"What's wrong," said I, "and why these tears?
You've thought about this day for years,
And now it's come, why cry this way?
Remember, it's her wedding day!"

"I know," said Aunt Eliza, "I
Know very well I shouldn't cry,
But—" here the other aunt began,
"You can't explain it to a man,
Nor can you possibly reveal
The dreadful things we women feel.
Men think a wedding should be gay,
And so they never cry this way!"

"Oh, bawl your heads off!" I replied,
"I'm on my way to kiss the bride,"
And left that funny red-nosed pair
Still sorrowfully sniffling there,
But at her door, I seemed to note
A curious tightening round my throat,
And had to stop, to my surprise,
To wipe some tear drops from my eyes.

The Ordinary Folks

Just an ordinary man, eight and forty to the day,
With a pair of stout-legged children starting upwards on life's way
And the mother of them mending little garments when they fray.

Just an ordinary house on an ordinary street
Where a grocer and a druggist and a foundry foreman meet,
And the women folks are busy cooking meals for men to eat.

Just an ordinary yard filled with ordinary things,
A clump of shasta daisies and nasturtiums climbing strings,
A patch of grass to sprawl on, and a happy bird that sings!

Why these ordinary lines in this ordinary way
To the ordinary people we encounter every day?
Just because they stand to duty when some softer people stray.

The Fighter

And if the fight I lose, what then?
The world is filled with stronger men
Than I, whose blows I cannot meet.
There's no disgrace in such defeat
Unless, perchance, afraid to fall,
I will not face my foe at all.

Lord, spare me that! The stronger man
May down me, since he knows he can.
The odds are with him. At a blow
He has the power to lay me low,
But till I cannot raise a fist
His every onslaught I'd resist.

I would not crawl upon the dust
Until I'm helpless and I must.
Outmatched I may be, but I'd fight
With all my courage and my might,
That he who puts me on my back
Shall know 'tis only strength I lack.

Some say 'tis wisdom oft to flee.
But judge of that each man must be,
And sometimes for his self-respect
A man must stand with head erect
And take the cruel blows which fall,
Rather than fail to fight at all.

Because He Lived

Because he lived, next door a child
To see him coming often smiled,
And thought him her devoted friend
Who gladly gave her coins to spend.

Because he lived, a neighbor knew
A clump of tall delphiniums blue
And oriental poppies red
He'd given for a garden bed.

Because he lived, a man in need
Was grateful for a kindly deed
And ever after tried to be
As thoughtful and as fine as he.

Because he lived, ne'er great or proud
Or known to all the motley crowd,
A few there were whose tents were pitched
Near his who found their lives enriched.

The Prodigal's Return

Lord, now the prodigal son returns
From the crowded street where the bright light
burns
Broken by pleasure and ready for toil;
Lord, he comes back to his native soil,
Back to the old roof, back to the door
Asking for pardon and blessing once more.

Lord, now the prodigal son again
Discovers that trust in earth's riches is vain;
Back he comes to the old-time truth
His mother taught in his days of youth,
Back to the courage in times of care
To the old-time faith and the old-time prayer.

Lord, the prodigal son comes home,
Who was lured by fortune and fame to roam;
Back he comes to the simpler things,
To the cheery song, which the kettle sings;
The joy of life 'neath the old home roof
And the peace of mind which is failure-proof.

Washington

Privations grim were his to bear
  Long hours of doubt were his to face.
With faith sublime and courage rare,
  Goalward he set his face.

Some heroes on full-tide are swept
  To glory and the chance they seek,
But Washington, at slow pace, crept
  Uncheered from week to week.

His was the genius of despair,
  The courage of the bitter doubt.
He saw men faltering everywhere
  But kept his own heart stout.

Had Washington by sufferings keen
  And envy's rancor been dismayed
Men's right to freedom might have been
  A century more delayed.

Plant A Garden

If your purse no longer bulges and you've lost your
golden treasure,
If at times you think you're lonely and have hungry
grown for pleasure,
Don't sit by your hearth and grumble, don't let
mind and spirit harden.
If it's thrills of joy you wish for, get to work and
plant a garden!

If it's drama that you sigh for, plant a garden and
you'll get it.
You will know the thrill of battle fighting foes that
will beset it.
If you long for entertainment and for pageantry
most glowing,
Plant a garden, and this summer spend your time
with green things growing.

If it's comradeship you sigh for, learn the fellow-
ship of daisies.
You will come to know your neighbor by the blos-
soms that he raises;
If you'd get away from boredom and find new
delights to look for,
Learn the joy of budding pansies which you've kept
a special nook for.

If you ever think of dying and you fear to wake
to-morrow,
Plant a garden! It will cure you of your melan-
cholic sorrow.
Once you've learned to know the peonies, petunias
and roses,
You will find that every morning some new hap-
piness discloses.

Ten-Year-Old

Our nine-year-old who went to bed
  Last night has disappeared.
Some time throughout the night she fled
  Precisely as I'd feared,
But in her place we now behold
A little lady, ten years old.

Some think no change in her they see.
  She looks the same, they swear,
But it is very plain to me
  That seated in her chair
Where once a nine-year-old held sway
A miss of ten years rules to-day.

Now, if when children talk you list,
  You'll understand it when
I say that differences exist
  'Twixt nine years old and ten.
The elder miss is wiser far
Than all the nine-year maidens are.

Dear Lord, I pray, to her be kind
  And bless her through the years.
When childhood must be left behind
  And womanhood appears,
May she, turned ten years old to-day,
Follow her mother's lovely way.

The Bread Line

They stood in line and shivered and the man in the middle said:
"Tell me the way to do it. Do I ask them for soup and bread?
Will they question my name and address?" The two of them looked him o'er
And one of them spoke up quickly: "Have you never been here before?"

"Never," the poor man answered. The man in the front turned round,
"You've always been used to comfort! Now the pain of the poor you've found."
And the man just behind said: "Easy! Don't jibe at him any more.
The bread line is cruel business if you've never been there before.

"You and I know no better; we've always worn clothing thin.
We've always been poor and lowly; we can stand in the line and grin,
We are used to this bitter business—but here at this kitchen door
Let's help him to get his breakfast—he's never been here before!"

Home-Makers

A shelter for the children and a place for them to play,
A red geranium or two to keep the corners gay;
A little patch of grass to trim, a pair of maple trees,
A path that leads up to the door, and home is made of these.

Some windows for the sun to find, and curtains white and neat,
Good neighbors to the right and left and just across the street;
A kettle singing on the stove, a couch that's built for ease,
A dog that wags his tail at you and home is made of these.

The smell of cookies baking or of onions in the stew,
The youngsters racing in and out, as children have to do;
Their footprints on the carpet left where every caller sees,
The simple prayers they say at night, and home is made of these.

High dreams of future greatness when the little ones are grown,
More thought about their welfare than is given to your own.
Long nights of anxious battling 'gainst the course of some disease,
Then times of song and laughter—every home is made of these.

Doctor's Waiting Room

'Twas little that I knew of pain
Until the hurt was mine;
I rose and went to bed again
And never had to whine,
And though I heard that men fell ill
And had to lie in bed,
I never thought of illness till
My appetite had fled.

Then came to me the dreadful day
Beset with aches and fears,
The nerves strange tricks began to play
Which had been good for years.
So to the doctors wise I went
To tell my tale of gloom,
And joined the throng, pale-faced and bent,
That fills the waiting room.

Still twice a week to them I go,
And every time I see
Dyspeptics sitting in a row
As glum as they can be;
And when the white-robed nurse comes out
A stranger's name to call,
I know just what it's all about,
For I've been through it all.

I look them over, young and old,
Humped sadly in their chairs;
I know what tubes the nurses hold
And just what use is theirs;
But this is what I've come to know
Since I have joined the line,
There are a lot of folks who go
Through troubles just like mine.

The Safe Golfer

He is never in a bunker, and he's never in the rough,
A drive of ordinary length to him is quite enough.
He plays the game the surest way; he never lifts his eye,
And never thinks to risk a shot where danger's apt to lie.

This sort of golfer doesn't know the game's supremest thrill—
He's never driven two hundred yards and what's more, never will.
He slaps the golf ball down the course, a most complacent soul,
Quite satisfied to take a five or six on any hole.

He never stamps his foot in rage or flings his clubs in air.
The man content with safety doesn't very often swear;
He plods his way around the course, but when the game is done
He hasn't had much trouble—and he hasn't had much fun.

Difficulties

Out in the sandy desert where never a cloud is seen,
You can go for miles and miles without sight of a patch of green,
And the lizards will slither across your path, but never a bird will sing,
And never a breeze to your burning brow will the day or the nighttime bring.

Oh, it's rain you need for your garden, it's winter and drifted snow,
For poor indeed are the tracts of earth which only the sunshine know.
And poor indeed is the human soul which shrinks from the touch of care
And seeks to live in some desert place where always the skies are fair.

For growth is born of the cloud and storm and the doubt which the morning brings,
As to and fro 'twixt care and rest life's pendulum daily swings.
When pleasure and ease are commonplace, then boredom's sands sweep in
And man will yearn for a storm to face or a difficult goal to win.

The Temptress

As I went walking down the way I met a pretty miss,
Who boldly looked at me and said: "A lovely day is this!"
Her hair was of a golden brown, her eyes a sparkling blue.
I proudly doffed my hat to her and answered, "Howdy-do!"

She placed her graceful hand in mine and turned to go my way.
Said I: "I have no time to flirt; I've work to do to-day,
I think you'd better run back home." With sadness dropped her chin.
"We'll pass the drug store soon," said she. "I thought you'd take me in."

"Oh, no," said I, "that wouldn't do. The hour is growing late
And I am on my way to town to keep a business date.
Besides, to make it very plain, no time for girls have I!"
At such a cold rebuff from me the maid began to cry.

Now, though I've been a married man for six-and-twenty years,
I haven't learned in all that time to cope with woman's tears.
And so I let that temptress fair, who's scarcely seven years old,
Escort me to the pharmacy where ice cream cones are sold.

Flower Courage

The little garden plot I tread
To music of the rustling leaves
At evening, as the sky grows red
My coming with delight receives.
The sad and weary world of doubt
By climbing roses is shut out.

The pretty little blossoms there
Assail me with no grievous word
Of burdens difficult to bear.
Near-by there is a singing bird
Exultant that he lives to be
The happy tenant of a tree.

So still and calm the scene appears
The peonies have no woes to tell.
No rose remembers happier years
And on its losses loves to dwell.
And yet somehow I seem to feel
Plants suffer hurts they could reveal.

The tenderest little bloom I own
Has braved the cruel winds and cold;
Has had to make its way alone
Against destroying foes and mold.
Yet nothing in my little yard
Like man cries out that life is hard.

November

November days are chill and cold
  The trees stand stark and bare
Like weary men grown gray and old
  Who once were young and fair.

The cheerless rains in torrents fall
  From leaden skies and gray,
And from the saddened garden wall
  The last vine drops away.

No flash of color blazes now
  To light the garden bed.
November winds will not allow
  One flower to lift its head.

"Make way for winter!" cries the blast
  And field and lane and hill
When the harsh gale has blustered past
  Lie strangely cold and still.

I wonder if November likes
  Such tasks of frost and storm,
Knowing that everywhere it strikes
  Falls beauty's crumpled form.

At the School Exercises

The fathers and the mothers on a certain happy day
Are called to watch their children in a pretty little play;
And the tired old faces glisten with the glory of a smile,
For everything the youngsters do seems very much worth while.
The cares are all forgotten and their hearts with rapture beat
As the little sons and daughters dance about on nimble feet.

On the day of graduation weary eyes aglow with pride,
Every sign of disappointment bravely seem to put aside.
One would never guess to see them all the labor of the weeks
To teach that boy the verses which he now so proudly speaks.
In that hour of young achievement triumph hides each fault and scar,
And the fathers and the mothers of their cares forgetful are.

It may be we shall discover when life's last long
shadows fall
We shall go as little children to the Father of us
all,
And in spite of every folly and the sins to which
we've turned
He shall smile upon us proudly for the lessons we
have learned.
By some little deed accomplished we may please
Him at the last,
And repay the loving Father for our failures of the
past.

They're planning to get married, and I'm rather glad
they are,
Although the road ahead to-day seems difficult and
far.
They've very little money, and I'm rather pleased
at that.
They'll know the joy of striving in an inexpensive
flat.

They're launching out together with high hopes and
courage great.
They'd dreamed of having riches, but they've chosen
not to wait,
And they're starting out with little—just his salary
every week—
And they'll have to save and struggle now for every
gain they seek.

Their bills will give them trouble, and they'll sigh
for things in vain.
She's going to do the cooking, and I fancy 'twill
be plain.
He'll help her in the kitchen and he'll dry the dishes,
too,
And learn a lot of duties that he never thought he'd
do.

But every chair they purchase will be laden with
delight;
Every trinket toiled and saved for will with joy be
doubly bright.
So I'm not the least bit sorry, but am positively
glad,
For they'll know the fun of striving which their
dads and mothers had.

The Work of Summer

Comes Summer to the world its work to do,
To bring fruition to the tiny seed;
To strew the earth with all that man may need;
To give the apple cheek its crimson hue
And the rich stores of golden grain renew;
To toil with patience and with certain speed
Without complaint o'er large or trivial deed.
And run in service here its brief course through.

I sometimes think that Summer seems to know
It shall not live to see its tasks complete.
It lays its glories gained at Autumn's feet,
And is content in having labored so,
As some tired father when his time is done,
Who leaves to those he loves the treasures won.

When the Baby Arrives

When a little baby comes
Little fingers, little thumbs,
Little chubby feet and toes
And the little button nose
Give the mother more delight
Than the stars which shine at night.

Others race to get a view
Of that little baby new.
Come the grandmas hastening there
In the happiness to share,
And among the wondering crowd
Walk the grandpas, very proud.

Comes a most devoted aunt,
Whom no other can supplant,
To discover endless charms
In those little dimpled arms
And to bring, as aunties do,
Little gifts of pink or blue.

So in manners quaint and strange
Thus the lives of many change.
With new hope the future gleams,
New delights, new cares, new dreams,
And with joy the old world hums,
When a little baby comes.

Real People

The backbone of the nation is the happy-hearted throng
Of ordinary people who go swinging right along.
They live in modest houses and they work from day to day
And the papers never notice what they do or what they say,
For they're always keeping busy at life's commonplace affairs,
Planning futures for their children, and what golden dreams are theirs!

They are settled in their habits and their views of wrong and right.
They are simple folk and friendly and they're often home at night.
They keep little backyard gardens and the mothers stitch and sew,
And the fathers all are saving for some joy they want to know.
They deal with hurt and sorrow with a faith they've learned to hold,
And they're patient with their children and they're mindful of the old.

They are honest with their neighbors, and they're honest in their play;
They are fond of mirth and music in a simple sort of way.

They believe in God and serve Him, and you'll
notice as a rule
They always send their children to a near-by Sunday
school;
And in spite of all the sneering of the scornful
or the base,
The simple, sturdy people are the backbone of the
race.

Twenty-five Years

Throughout the years that we've been wed,
With all their stormy weather,
And all their fits of doubt and dread,
Somehow we've kept together.
Somehow, my dear, in spite of care
And hurts that came to smart us,
And little wrongs which seemed unfair,
We've never let them part us.

Oh, we've had days of storm and stress,
And we've had griefs that tried us;
But sorrow never made love less
Or threatened to divide us.
Somehow in spite of all I've done
And said when irritated,
We've managed to keep going on
Like sweethearts, newly mated.

We've had our share of ups and downs
And tasks to irk and fret us,
Our foolishness brought frequent frowns,
Our blunders grave upset us.
But since the tie that binds oft snaps
For others just as plucky,
And we've escaped disaster, p'raps
My dear, we've just been lucky.

Creed

Lord, for the day 'tis these I ask:
The courage needed for the task;
The patience to abide delay,
The willingness the friend to play.

Lord, grant to me what strength I'll need
For every large or trivial deed;
And let me, ere the sun descends,
For all past failures make amends.

In some way when shall come the test,
Lord, let me measure to my best;
So let me live that others may
Rejoice that I have passed their way.

Lord, this my hope and this my prayer,
That in Thy purpose I may share
And by Thy mercy and Thy grace
Make this day more than commonplace.

Joseph of Arimathea

Joseph of Arimathea had lived out his long career,
Growing by counseling wisely, wealthier, year by year.
He was known as a righteous rich man, gentle and kind and true,
But history seldom lingers to tell us what such men do.

Joseph of Arimathea in the gloom of a Friday night
Visited Pontius Pilate—the envoy of Roman might.
"There was a man named Jesus nailed to a cross to-day,"
Said he, "and I ask permission to care for his lifeless clay.

"Little I know about him, but I've heard that his life was clean.
I am told that because of his teachings men hated this Nazarene.
Those who are called his apostles still fear what the mob may do,
So I ask your august permission to care for a fellow Jew."

And Pilate who trusted Joseph and honored him, promptly said:

"I will give you a guard of soldiers. Go now and bury the dead."

Thus strangely is history fashioned. From one kindly deed there came

To the rich man of Arimathea eternal glory and fame.

Supper's Ready

Supper's ready! There's the call
I delight in most of all!
With the evening settling down,
Everybody home from town,
Tired and hungry, but content
With the way the day was spent;
Waiting patient as can be
Mother's cry: "Come on to tea!"

Supper's ready! One and all
Hurry gladly down the hall,
And with smiles upon their faces
At the table take their places.
Here's a summons, girl and boy,
Not to labor, but to joy;
Not to do and dare and die,
But to bread and meat and pie!

Supper's ready! Do you hear?
Loved ones come and gather near,
Put away your petty cares,
To the table draw your chairs.
Now the busy day is done,
Let's be merry every one,
And be grateful to the Lord
For the food upon the board.

Making the Best of It

Making the best of it! What do you mean:
Doing with little and staying serene?
When but a burden has luxury been?

Making the best of it! Do you regard
Toil and its need as excessively hard?
Since when has indolence paid a reward?

Making the best of it! Can it be said
Children grow strong when on sweets they are fed?
Since when has cake nourished better than bread?

Making the best of it! Twist it about,
Difficult problems and dark days of doubt,
Once more are bringing the best of us out.

The Lovely Smile

The little lady old and gray
  Still had a lovely smile for all,
And many a cheery word to say
  When people came to call.

And if you stopped beside her gate
  In summer, autumn or the spring,
Your coat lapel she'd decorate
  With some gay bit of blossoming.

We thought of her as always gay
  And lovely as a sunny morn,
Who smiled our bitterness away,
  And yet herself no care had borne.

She showed no scar of injuries old
  And never mentioned hurts she'd known.
She listened to the woes we told;
  Deep hidden kept her own.

Yet out of sorrow's bitterest hours,
  And out of heartache and distress,
The little lady raised her flowers
  And earned that smile of loveliness.

The Drawback

I know a surgeon calm and wise,
The hand of death he stays;
He's marvelous where danger lies.
But awful bridge he plays.

I know a warrior brave and bold
Who fought at Vimy Ridge;
His fame, in history shall be told,
But he's a dub at bridge!

I know a man whose fortunes mount
Beyond the dreams of bards,
And yet at bridge he cannot count
Exactly thirteen cards.

There is a lawyer, best of men,
On whom a case to rest,
Who cannot seem to learn just when
A queen should be finessed.

And so I think in moments when
Misplays my partners call,
That many of our greatest men
Can't play the game at all.

Playing Father

I notice when they're playing house, Miss Janet
wants to be
The mother in the flowing gown to sit and serve
the tea,
And always there's an argument that endless seems
to run,
No child likes playing father, for it isn't any fun!

Now one will be the servant girl, and one will be
the nurse,
And very gravely day by day these roles will they
rehearse;
But when they come to settle which will play the
father's part,
As sure as I am telling tales a quarrel's bound to
start.

It seems these little mimics, aping grown-ups ways
and airs,
Have learned that it is father who must carry in the
chairs,
It's father who must do the work and all the
errands run,
And if they make you be the man you can't have
any fun.

I chuckle as I watch them, with Miss Janet pouring
tea
And giving orders to the child who's imitating me.
I love this childish drama, but I'd tell 'em every
one,
That after all their father really has a lot of fun!

Paid in Advance

He never had a problem, and he never had a care—
He merely had to buy them when he needed shoes
to wear.
He never had a mortgage, with the interest overdue,
So the common woes of most of us he never really
knew.
He never had to sacrifice to buy his wife a hat—
The dad who lived before him had attended to all
that.

He never had to worry, never had to scheme and
plan,
To save a little money like the ordinary man.
Was the parlor carpet fading? He sent out and
bought a new,
And never thought about it when the bill for it was
due.
If the notion came upon him he could travel any-
where,
Since his dear old dad before him had already paid
his fare.

He never had a doctor's bill he couldn't promptly
pay.
He never had a duty rise to interfere with play.

He never suffered failure; never knew despair or doubt
Or the cares which common people have to think so much about,
By his dear old dad before him every needful thing was done,
But he'd merely robbed his youngster of a glorious lot of fun.

What's in It for Me?

We fancied he'd share in our cause. Instead,
"There is nothing in it for me!" he said.
He passed up pity and play and mirth
And counted his time to the penny's worth.
Ask for his help, and this would be
His answer: "What is there in it for me?"

Nothing it meant if you said: "In this
Perhaps is friendship you'll some day miss.
Here is a task that won't pay in gold,
But will leave you prouder when you grow old.
Though nothing for this will your purse collect,
It will pay you richly in self-respect."

"What is there in it for me?" he said.
We mentioned pride, but he shook his head.
"The joy of giving," he flicked his hand—
That he never could understand.
And he found when life's last far bend was turned
That money was all he had ever earned.

The First Tooth

Customs change and nations fall,
Fashions come and fashions go.
Father Time may alter all
Which of pride and pomp we know,
But ten thousand years away,
With their added gains of truth,
Still will mothers hail the day
When the baby gets a tooth!

Great events may come to pass;
Marvels may be wrought by man.
Powerful microscopic glass
May discover nature's plan.
What important now we deem
May be scorned by wiser youth;
Still a triumph it will seem
When the baby gets a tooth!

Time may alter many things,
Bettering our present good,
But what change the future brings
Will not vary motherhood.
As it's now it still will be
For another million years,
Mother's eyes will dance with glee
When the first white tooth appears.

Autumn

The falling leaves seem pitiful to see,
Cold, old, brown things that quit life's rugged stem.
They've clung so gladly to their mother tree
And now the frozen earth is taking them.

I watch them fluttering 'neath a somber sky,
Too frail to battle with the wind to-day
And wonder if, like men, they fear to die
And longer on the branch would care to stay.

I watched them come to bud in early spring
And through the summer knew their friendly shade.
Among them I have heard the song birds sing.
Ours was a friendship brief, but gladly made.

But now too old and tired to carry on,
A last farewell they seem to wave at me,
Drift past my window swiftly and are gone
To find their purpose in eternity.

The Black Sheep

Why they never understood
They had labored for his good,
Led him through his days of youth
Always to the paths of truth,
Yet when burned temptation's flame
Often was he lured to shame.

Him they never understood,
Naught was told them so they could.
Strange they thought it he should be
So unlike his ancestry.
Back for years his kith and kin
Had remained unshamed by sin.

Never were they reconciled
To this wayward, careless child.
Never could they understand
Why he heeded no command;
Why in matters, great or small,
He was different from them all.

When he died the mourners near
Couldn't see and couldn't hear,
But below the dust was stirred
And a friendly willow heard,
One long dead to memory,
Whispering: "He was just like me."

The Carver

I sing of the old-fashioned carver who gracefully
wielded his blade,
Who sat in his place with a grin on his face and
was deaf to the comment we made;
He had learned every joint of a chicken, a turkey,
a partridge, or goose,
And he sat there or stood as a gentleman should as
he cleverly whittled them loose.
Oh, there was an artist worth watching, a master
performer was he;
But the age has grown smart, and that glorious art
is a joy that no longer we see.

My grandfather taught to my father the knack of
dissecting a hen,
He made him recite where was dark meat and light
again and again and again.
He trained him to sharpen his knife on the steel, and
to flourish his blade in the air,
He shouted: "Alack! You do nothing but hack,
when you ought to be slicing with care."
'Twas a gentleman's boast as he sat at a roast that
he skillfully handled his knife;
And until a boy knew where the second joint grew
he wasn't thought ready for life.

Now they whittle the meat in the kitchen, and bring
it piled up on a plate;
Be it roast beef or ham, or a turkey or lamb, it is
passed in the ready-carved state.
And nobody jests with the carver, and nobody
praises his art;
There are grown men to-day who unblushingly say
they can't get a drum stick apart,
But something has gone from the dinner, however
expensive its cost,
That we viewed with delight in the age taken flight,
ere the fine art of carving was lost.

Love of Beauty

The love of beauty once possessed
  Outlives the sordid dust and grime,
And holds its dwelling in the breast
  Against the ravages of time.

And this is why a woman wan
  And grayed and beaten by defeat,
From day to day will struggle on
  To keep an ugly dwelling neat.

Day after weary day will see
  Her battling with the dirt and dust,
Fighting the filth of poverty
  Because her nobler nature must.

So fond of beauty humans are
  That often in a squalid room
A woman fills with stones a jar
  And brings a lily bulb to bloom.

Fear

The great god Fear grinned back at me:
"I am the foe men never see,
The hurt they never feel," said he.

"I am the wrong they never bear,
The poison they themselves prepare.
I am the shadow on the stair.

"I have no voice and yet I speak;
No strength and yet I blanch the cheek
And leave the strongest mortals weak.

"I am the blackguard man befriends,
Heeds most, feeds, cherishes, attends
And 'gainst all counsel wise defends.

"I fire no gun, I make no cry,
No lodging place in fact have I,
Yet I'm the countless deaths men die.

"Mine is a humor ghastly grim,
The lamp of reason I can dim,
Though I am nothing but a whim.

"I am man's cruelest, bitterest foe,
Yet past his door I could not go,
Had he the wit to tell me; 'No'."

Noisy Place

It is difficult to read
When for candy children plead,
And I find it quite disturbing
When with shouts there is no curbing
They come bounding in the place
At a mad and merry pace,
Just as if the world and all
Had been made for children small.

It is difficult to write
When with innocent delight
And a joy no frown can smother
Lusty lungs are calling: "Mother!
May we go in swimming now?"
So I sit and mop my brow
And I push the work away
Till there comes a quiet day.

It is difficult to nap
When the screen doors bang and slap
And a most tumultuous riot
Shatters every hope of quiet.
For no youngster ever thinks
Father needs those forty winks,
Or respects the plea we make
To be still for mother's sake.

But somehow it seems to me
That more difficult 'twould be
Could I sit and read whenever
Came the fancy, knowing never
Child o' mine would burst the door
To disturb me as of yore.
I should oft' be longing then
To be bothered once again.

The Layman

Leave it to the ministers, and soon the church will
die;
Leave it to the women folk; the young will pass
it by;
For the church is all that lifts us from the coarse
and selfish mob,
And the church that is to prosper needs the layman
on the job.

Now, a layman has his business, and a layman has
his joys;
But he also has the training of his little girls and
boys;
And I wonder how he'd like it if there were no
churches here
And he had to raise his children in a godless atmos-
phere.

It's the church's special function to uphold the
finer things,
To teach the way of living from which all that's
noble springs;
But the minister can't do it single-handed and alone,
For the laymen of the country are the church's
corner-stone.

When you see a church that's empty, though its
doors are open wide,
It is not the church that's dying; it's the laymen
who have died;
For it's not by song or sermon that the church's
work is done;
It's the laymen of the country who for God must
carry on.

Careless

I could not be a fashion plate,
  However hard I'd try.
It always seems to be my fate
  To wear a roving tie,
And though my tailor does his best
  To keep me slick and trim,
The dog hair clinging to my vest,
  Cannot be charged to him.

Some men upon disaster's brink,
  Remember their attire,
And always seem to stop to think
  Before they're splashed with mire;
But I, although I know it's wrong,
  So heedlessly to rush,
Forget my clothes and plod along
  Right through the pool of slush.

And some men fold their coats with care,
  The women folks to please,
Some keep their trousers in repair,
  Apparently with ease,
But mine grow wrinkled in a day,
  And soon their lustre lose,
By gathering the powdered clay
  From little Janet's shoes.

Well, let mine be the wrinkled coat
  Which marks the careless chap;
I'll take the greater happiness
  Of Janet in my lap.
I'd rather all the world should see
  My raiment's shabby state,
And keep her love, than live to be
  Some tailor's fashion plate.

Cure for the Sulks

Sometimes when I don't play
  The way she wants me to
Then Florence May will say:
  "All right! I'm mad with you!"
And then she'll sulk and pout
  An' next day she pretends,
When I come walkin' out,
  That we're not bein' friends.

But when I get a dime
  For lollypops or gum,
Or if it's cookie time
  An' Mary's given me some,
An' I go out to play
  Just like I've done before,
Then Florence May will say:
  "I'm not mad any more."

It's rather queer to me,
  But mother says it's how
Things used to be when she
  Was young as I am now.
Her playmate used to cry,
  "I'm mad at you," an' then
Candy or cake or pie
  Would make them friends again.

Grace at Table

When I was but a little lad, not more than eight or nine,
The mother had a table prayer she taught us line by line.
With all the family gathered round, heads bowed and hands in place
We'd sit in solemn silence until one of us said grace.

"Be present at our table, Lord," her favorite grace began.
"Be here and everywhere adored," the little couplet ran.
"These creatures bless and grant that we—" I hear it now as then—
"May feast in Paradise with Thee!" and all would say, *"Amen."*

Day in and out through weal and woe, high gain or common-place,
At every meal our heads we bowed throughout this simple grace.
"Be present at our table, Lord!" From all that has occurred
And all the joy that we have known—I'm sure He must have heard.

Parental Pride

Just a little baby,
  Cute as she can be,
Lovely as the blossom
  On the apple tree.
Round the wide world over
  Babies, like the flowers,
Are beautiful to look at,
  But none like this of ours!

There are blue-eyed babies
  Smiling everywhere,
Babes with dimpled elbows,
  Cheeks as soft and fair,
But there's none we'd change for.
  Let the truth be known—
There's no other baby
  As pretty as our own.

Selfish, yes, and boastful,
  Proud as folks can be;
Out of all the babies,
  Loveliest is she.
Let the neighbors coldly
  Our conceit discuss,
But God's perfect baby
  Has been sent to us.

Landlord and Tenant

The landlord wouldn't paint the place
  Or keep it in repair,
Yet at the window panes was lace,
  Though every board was bare,
And those who passed it by could trace
  The tenant's tender care.

And those who passed it by could see
  A blossoming plant or two.
Despite the tenant's poverty
  A little garden grew,
Lovely and gay and orderly
  The blazing summer through.

The landlord Life at times seems cold
  And deaf to every plea,
Yet to our dreams we still can hold,
  Courageous we can be
And 'round the place plant marigold
  For passers-by to see.

We, too, with faith, can plant a rose
  Where all is bleak and bare
And fashion pretty furbelows
  For windows of despair,
And work, till our poor dwelling shows
  A tenant's tender care.

The Grumbling Soldier

There was a grumbling soldier who growled the whole year long,
What wasn't was the "ought-to-be"; what was was always wrong.
He didn't like his station, and he made it plain to me
That anywhere he wasn't was the place he'd rather be.

He didn't like his general; he cursed his captain, too;
He saw no rhyme or reason in the chores they made him do.
He wished they would transfer him to some post across the sea,
For anywhere he wasn't was the place he'd like to be.

They sent him o'er the ocean with his rifle and his pack,
But no sooner had he landed than he wished that he were back.
He couldn't stand the tropics with the hot sun blazing down.
The place to be a soldier was some good old Yankee town.

At last death's final transfer moved him on to realms afar.
He drew a post in Heaven where the perfect quarters are.
But hardly was he seated when he passed around the word:
If St. Peter could arrange it he would like to be transferred.

The Martins

The Martins are peculiar and whimsical at best,
They're very charming tenants if with you they choose to nest,
But though the house you build for them may perfect seem to be
You cannot coax them into it if something wrong they see.

I do not know precisely what the Martins ask from men;
I only know they like a house with rooms for eight or ten,
And it must stand above the ground full fourteen feet or more
With unimpeded space about for them to wheel and soar.

The neighborhood must suit their choice; the gardens must be neat,
Nor will they stay to raise their young along a noisy street,
And many a man has built a house their fellowship to win
Which for some cause, to him unknown, they would not enter in.

The scouts come on in early spring to look the houses o'er,

And if they do not like the place you'll see their
charms no more,
But should the home their fancies suit, within a
day or two
The Martins will arrive to spend the summertime
with you.

Bi-Focal Trouble

The wise optician smiled and said:
"The upper half to look ahead,
The lower half whereby to read,
And thus one pair is all you need.
Have patience. In a week or two
Bi-focals will not trouble you."

I muttered as I left the shop:
"For distance always use the top;
The bottom lenses you will need
When you sit down to write or read."
I raised my right foot high in air
To mount a step which wasn't there.

The level street became a hill;
I looked at people standing still,
And, since I used the lower glass,
There seemed no room for me to pass;
I turned a corner of the street
And knocked a woman from her feet.

And all that day throughout the town
My eyes kept looking up and down.
"That fellow's drunk," I heard men say
As I went reeling down the way.
With those bi-focals on my face
The town became a crazy place.

Bi-focal troubles curious are:
The far seems near, the near seems far.
You step for heights that don't exist
And jostle folks you should have missed;
Until man grows bi-focal wise
He finds he can't believe his eyes.

Incident

There was a lonely woman in a cottage. Day by day
Alone she walked her garden round to pass the time away.
Alone she brewed her cup of tea. At nine o'clock at night
Alone she walked from room to room to lock the windows tight.

She heard the neighbors laughing, but she never turned to see,
Nor raised her head nor took a step to share their revelry.
Her hair was thin and silvered and her face was lined with care.
And only little children ever found a welcome there.

For them she fashioned cookies to resemble polar bears
And sugar dates and walnut cakes and other sweet affairs,
And every little boy or girl who passed her threshold o'er
Could eat her stock of goodies till they couldn't swallow more.

She paid no heed to grown-ups, and the neighbors
wondered why.
Alone she chose to keep her house; alone she chose
to die.
The men folk thought her crazy, and the women
often stood
And wondered who had wronged her, but the chil-
dren thought her good.

We never learned her story. All alone one night
she died
And when the children missed her, men were called
to break inside.
They found her lying on the floor, her voice forever
stilled,
And in the room the cookie jar, which she had just
re-filled.

About Children

Little children ought to be
  Seen and seldom heard.
If at dinner time or tea
  Such a thing occurred,
I should promptly make a plea
  For a merry word.

If they waited until they
  First were spoken to,
As the grown-ups often say
  Little ones should do,
I should ask them right away,
  "Children, how are you?"

I don't want them sitting there
  Solemn as can be,
Each one rigid in his chair;
  If I want to see
Images and statues rare
  Art museums are free.

Little children should be seen
  And not heard by day!
Who could by a thought so mean
  Lead the world astray?
What a grouch he must have been
  Such a thing to say!

Beauty

The busy world has time and space
For posey and bits of lace,

For paintings, star dust, silver streams,
And things as fanciful as dreams.

Not all in nature men behold
Is sternly practical and cold,

For countless lovely things she weaves
For which no purpose man perceives.

At times she seems to draw apart
Merely to make a work of art,

Or brighten with her labors rare
Places which otherwise were bare.

So in the busy life of man
Which reason wholly seems to plan,

The self-same impulse bids him take
The time to work for beauty's sake,

And count as his supreme success,
Trifles of dainty loveliness.

Those Duty Calls

When bill collectors call on me
I know that duty sends them.
They do not come my books to see
Though I'm a man who lends them.
Nor do they come to chat a while
Or ask me how I'm feeling;
Their visit, howsoe'er they smile,
Is just a business dealing.

A plumber makes a duty call
When pipes of ours are leaking.
He may not like the house at all,
Our friendship he's not seeking.
He comes because he's sent to see
What's wrong and to correct it,
And leaves without good-bye to me;
What's more, I don't expect it.

But friendship sometimes takes a way
Which sadly mars its beauty,
How often man is heard to say:
"Because it is my duty
I'm going to call on Jim or Joe
And say a word to cheer him;
I really think I ought to go
Because I'm living near him."

These social duty calls I hate
With bitter detestation.
I want no one to swing my gate
To quit an obligation.
Alone I'd rather twirl my thumbs
Than give a moment's thought to
The proudest visitor who comes
Because he feels he ought to.

Linen and Lace

A linen man from Syria has pretty wares to sell,
Embroidered things and lacy things which women love so well.
He brings them in a mighty grip held fast with leather stout,
And any wife will have to buy if once he gets them out.

A banquet cloth from Italy he spreads across his knee;
"Oh, madam, here's a bargain that's as cheap as cheap can be!
And here is lace from Normandy that's truly very fine;
While here I have a damask cloth of marvelous design!"

To me, they're merely table spreads and napkins he displays.
I cannot see why women sit so long at them to gaze;
But, oh, the wily linen man has speech at his command,
Concerning lovely luncheon sets which ladies understand.

I have expensive habits of my own, I must confess;
I've often looked at costly books and hungered to
possess.
I've bought them when I shouldn't, so I understand
her case.
Her weakness is for pretty things of linen and of
lace.

Patience

The patient man who stands to care
  And shrugs his shoulders now and then
At little hurts he has to bear
  Outdistances the fretful men.

The patient man who bit by bit
  Some trying, tedious task completes,
Conquers where fretful men admit
  The pain required their skill defeats.

The price of many goals is Time,
  Plus willingness to work and wait.
Though courage oft is called sublime,
  One must have patience to be great.

Steadfast of purpose he must be,
  Who would some worth while goal attain;
When fretful men disheartened flee,
  The man of patience dares again.

Wisdom

This is wisdom, maids and men:
Knowing what to say and when.

Speech is common; thought is rare;
Wise men choose their words with care.

Artists with the master touch
Never use one phrase too much.

Jesus, preaching on the Mount,
Made His every sentence count.

Lincoln's Gettysburg address
Needs not one word more nor less.

This is wisdom, maids and men:
Knowing what to say and when.

Sleeping Child

I like to tiptoe round her when she's lying fast asleep
And straighten out the covers where she's kicked them in a heap,
And when I find her sprawling kitty-corner on the bed
I find it fun to set aright that lovely sleepy-head.

Oh, whether late or early I'm retiring for the night,
I slip into her bedroom just to see that she's all right;
I stand and gaze upon her and I chuckle when I see
Her feet are on the pillow where her little head should be.

She's grown so very lively that she can't stay still at all.
The moment that she drops asleep she starts right in to crawl
And sometimes, like a wooly dog, as comfy as you please,
I've found her lost in dreamland with her head between her knees.

Oh, I have tasks that weary me, and tasks that I detest.

The mother's always calling me to work when I would rest,
But straightening out a little girl who's sleeping wrong-end to,
I'd call the happiest task on earth a father has to do.

Achievement

Let him who will go running for the lights that gleam afar,
Where the music's tuned to dancing and the crowds of people are;
Give me the restful evenings with the family gathered round
And the few friends, tried and faithful, and that little patch of ground,
With its lawn and beds of posies, which reflect the care I give,
And I'll build a thousand memories to cherish while I live.

When I long for entertainment just to pass the time away,
I've no lack of mirth and frolic—with the children I can play.
Or in need of some diversion, as a happy group we'll go
Hand in hand to sit together at a neighboring picture show.
But we'll keep our wants in reason and we'll keep our pleasures sweet
And try to find the gladness that adorns our little street.

Oh, the book of life is written not in scarlet inks or gold

Or in deeds of dash and color. As a simple tale it's told.
When you reach the final chapter and you glimpse the pages through
All that memory has recorded as the worth while side of you
Are the joys and passing sorrows which the family has shared,
With the failures and achievements and the few good friends who cared.

'Tis the little house and garden where the life-time labors count.
Not in dollars but in friendships will our satisfactions mount.
Has the home-place been a haven where the children joyed to be?
Do they turn and look upon it with a happy memory?
If, in spite of hurt and sorrow, the old walls have known content,
You have filled your life with glory and your days have been well-spent.

Evening Smoke

I saw the blue smoke rising from a little chimney stack,
And I knew somewhere across the fields a man was coming back.
The train that bore me westward kept rushing on its way,
But I fancied I could see him as he closed another day.

Fresh smoke it was, I'm certain, for when a fire is old
The wisps that leave the chimney seem thin and worn and cold.
But blue smoke, hale and hearty, informs the weary man
That mother's in the kitchen and supper's in the pan.

Somewhere beyond the woodland I know he trudged along,
A scythe upon his shoulder and on his lips a song;
His day of labor ended, and like as not, thought I,
He's thinking now of steaming stew, topped off with apple pie.

What curious thoughts and fancies beset the home-sick man

Who through a Pullman window the landscape turns
to scan.
The smoke at evening tells him a husband's coming
home
And supper's waiting for him—but he must west-
ward roam.

The Business of an Uncle

It's the business of an uncle, which I've frequently
expressed,
To buy the toys and candies which the youngsters
like the best,
And although the dads and mothers must at times
some joys refuse,
An uncle's proper function is to give 'em what they
choose.

It may be a mother's duty now and then to mutter,
"No";
And a wise and proper father should not every
sweet bestow,
But with nephews and with nieces every uncle worth
his salt
Should disdain all such restrictions and be generous
to a fault.

Now I know the uncle business, in these very pros-
perous times.
He should always, on his visits, take a pocketful of
dimes,
And of course if there is something which the par-
ents have denied,
It's an uncle's job to buy it just to keep them sat-
isfied.

It's the duty of the parents to be strict and very
stern,
And to teach those little rascals all the lessons they
must learn,
But an uncle's job is different. He's another sort of
man,
And the business of an uncle is to spoil 'em if he
can.

Garden Experience

It was difficult to work with; it was stubborn yellow clay,
So we dug it from the garden and threw it all away,
And we bought a load of top soil, very rich and very black,
Which with scarcely any effort, would with blossoms pay us back.

Yellow clay is dull to work with and it bakes beneath the sun
And the man who has to fight it knows his work seems never done.
So we threw it in the alley, for impatient folks are we,
And we wanted flowers in summer without such a costly fee.

But our roses failed to flourish and we saw them pine and die,
And we called upon a gardener who knew to tell us why.
He looked the bushes over in his wise and kindly way
And said: "If you want roses what you need is yellow clay."

In our ignorance we'd fancied only richer soils were good.
That the heavy clay held virtue we had never understood.
It had seemed so dull and stubborn that we found to our dismay
We had had the stuff for roses, but had thrown it all away.

The Human Alarm Clock

Oh, there are clocks of various kinds
Designed for rousing sleepy minds;
And set for any hour you choose
They're advertised to end your snooze
But when it comes to downright charm
Give me that three-year old alarm!

Give me that lovely tousled head
That comes at dawn unto my bed,
And with a most astounding leap
Breaks in to end my sweetest sleep,
And shouts this glad news in my ear:
"Wake up! Another day is here!"

I have no love for bells that ring
When I, in peace, am slumbering,
And I confess that I despise
The tinkling clock which bids me rise,
But when that child comes tumbling in
I start the morning with a grin.

No clock more accurately knows
When day begins and nighttime goes
Than does that lovely child of three
Who runs to romp in bed with me;
Precisely on the stroke of six
A finger in my ear she sticks,

The day may come when I shall keep
My bed in sweet unbroken sleep,
And in those sad and lonely times
Though I am roused by silver chimes
I'll still recall the roguish charm
Of her, our three-year old alarm!

"What did you do?" asked the Lord, and the traveling tinsmith said:
"I used to mend old pots and pans to earn my daily bread.
And you can't get rich at that, for it's little the poor can pay
For closing a gap in a kettle's side, and the rich just send you away.

"Lord, I hadn't much chance on earth, for I traveled the humble streets
Where none but the needy and common folks a traveling tinsmith meets.
Perhaps I am all to blame, but I haven't the right to ask
A place up here with the great and wise for doing so small a task."

And the good Lord smiled and said: "I have so devised my plans
That a place in Heaven may at last be won by a mender of pots and pans.
And all that I care to know and all that I'd have you tell
Is, when you were given a kettle to mend, are you sure that you did it well?"

Tuffy

All the house is sad to-day,
Tuffy has been laid away!
Tuffy, blithe of heart and brave,
Slumbers in a little grave.
Oh, the bitter tears we've shed
Over happy Tuffy, dead!

Just a dog! Well, maybe so,
To the folks who come and go,
But to Janet and to me,
He was friendly company;
Honest, faithful, tender, too!
More so than some men he knew.

Tuffy had the sort of mind
Unto friendliness inclined.
Watched for Janet day by day
Coming home from school to play;
Knew the time and o'er and o'er
Stood to greet her at the door.

Say it's foolish, if you will,
But we're grieving for him still.
Say that dogs should dwell apart
And not crawl into your heart
So their deaths can sadden you,
But the trouble is they do.

Circus Memories

Oh, never comes the circus with its wonders into town
But I recall a little boy who longed to be a clown,
And high above the heads of all an acrobat I see
That little lad of long ago was hopeful he would be.

No care had he for words that rhyme. A more entrancing thing
Was jumping on and off a horse within a sawdust ring.
And all the verses ever penned he'd gladly trade back then
To be the spangled hero in the roaring lions' den.

There was a riding lady in a fluffy skirt of pink
Who might have lured this little boy away from printer's ink,
But destiny or fortune or the fates (or was it dad?)
Contrived to change the life-work of this circus dreaming lad.

He would not now retrace his steps. Through eyes now growing dim
He sees an acrobat's career would not have done for him.
But still when bands are playing and the circus barkers shout
A little boy of fifty-one walks wide-eyed round about.

Marriages

The man had little at all to say,
The woman was pretty and smart and gay,
And everyone wondered what she could see
To love in so solemn a man as he,
And everyone wondered what charm he'd shown
The love of a woman so fair to own.

Oh, you waste your time when you sit outside
And try to discover why knots are tied;
Why Jean weds Joe and why Frank loves May.
Fate ties them up in its own good way,
And the fact remains when the wondering's done
By the strangest men are some women won.

Ugly and fair and dull and bright
These are the twain which oft unite,
But this you'll learn if you watch them smile;
Love isn't founded on looks or style,
And the man or the woman you can't abide
Is always somebody's joy and pride.

Father's Problem

What do you do when a young fellow comes
And sits in the parlor and twiddles his thumbs,
Or settles himself in your favorite chair
And acts just as though he'd a right to be there?
When you know very well why he's hanging about,
Do you call a policeman and have him thrown out?

When you come home at five for a pre-dinner nap
And you find on the sofa that dreamy-eyed chap,
And four times a week, though expenses you'd trim,
The maid sets a place at the table for him,
Where he ogles your daughter the whole meal-time
through–
Tell me, you fathers, what is there to do?

When mother keeps saying the young man's all
right,
But you're certain yourself that he's not very bright,
And you don't like his necktie, his collar or shoes,
Is it wise to start warfare you're certain to lose?
When he borrows your car and your gasoline, too,
Is there something to stop this a father can do?

I know what's on foot and I seem to recall
A father to whom I gave no thought at all.
I was after his daughter, and would he or no,
When I entered I thought he should get up and go.
So I fancy when young men are prompted to woo
There is not very much that a father can do.

Radio

A thing of tubes and wires, and lo,
The miracle of radio!
The simple dial turning round
Searches the atmosphere for sound
And captures from the silent air
Song, music, eloquence and prayer.

How strange this mystery of things
Which to mankind such pleasure brings
And day and night with cheer illumes
The dreariest and loneliest rooms!
I never turn the dials round
But what I feel a thrill profound.

Fed by the magic microphones
The air takes up its freight of tones
And carries safely every word
Till nation-wide the voice is heard.
A singer in New York appears
And distant California hears.

Oh, happier world, where all may know
The miracle of radio!
These things of tubes and wires now grace
The mansion and the cottage place
And rich and poor alike may share
The golden harvest of the air.

Autumn Scene

Upon the hills the giant trees with color were ablaze,
Like smoke from smouldering embers rose the late October haze.
All silent and magnificent I fancied I could see
The Master Artist touching up some solitary tree,
But the glory of the landscape was a flash of crimson flame
At the bottom of the picture where the painter signs his name.

Now I cannot speak the language of the men who paint and draw,
And with technical precision can't describe the scene I saw.
All I know is that a picture was unrolled for me to see,
And the high lights and the shadows seemed just what they ought to be,
But that gorgeous burst of color in the foreground caught my eye,
And I knew it made the landscape, though I couldn't say just why.

It struck me as peculiar, where an earthly painter signs,
The Master Artist splashed His name in tangled shrubs and vines.

And as I stepped up closer I discovered and was glad
He had given that touch of splendor to the poorest stuff He had.
To the common things in summer which man scarcely sees at all
He had given the place of honor and the glory of the fall.

Those First Long Trousers

We went together, just as though
Together we must share the blow;
Though she alone had gone before,
We went together to the store
And watched him proudly try them on,
And then our little boy was gone.
Our little knickerbockered lad
Came out a youth, in trousers clad!

The smiling clerk said: "Fine!" but, oh,
Our stab of pain he couldn't know.
Perhaps he truly thought it strange
That mother didn't like the change
And felt that something in her died
The minute that he stepped inside
That little dressing room alone,
But well I understood that moan.

She knew that never more he'd be
The little boy upon her knee,
The laughing, loving, roguish child
Whose kisses on her cheek were piled.
She knew what change was taking place
Within that narrow dressing space.
Her child went in beyond a doubt,
But soon a man was coming out.

The clerk said: "Fine!" but well I knew
The mother held a different view.
The little lad she'd loved was gone,
There stood a youth with trousers on;
A youth with shoulders broad and square,
A youth who had a jaunty air,
And when we left that clothing store
We had a little boy no more.

Happiness

He builded his happiness out of these:
Birds and blossoms and friendly trees,
Books that stood on a little shelf,
Three or four neighbors, much like himself,
The wife and children who bore his name
And he asked no favors from wealth or fame.

He found delight in his garden plot,
Knew marigold and forget-me-not;
He walked the hills, and he fished the streams,
With friends he trusted he shared his dreams.
He was sometimes merry and sometimes sad,
But he made the most of what joys he had.

He found his thrills in the lesser things,
The joy a blossoming peony brings;
The merry songs and the kindly mirth
Of the gentle women and men of earth.
He thanked his God for the right to live,
And he never asked more than life could give.

Seekers for happiness wander far,
And, oh, how jaded and tired they are,
Forever pursuing the strange new thrill
They never have caught and never will!
But he found friendship and flowers and trees,
And builded his happiness out of these.

The Proud Pheasant

Sometimes a pheasant comes to call
  And brings his plain-garbed hens to see
My lattice fence where roses sprawl
  And my two clumps of shrubbery.

He struts about my garden plot
  Arrayed in all his plumage gay
And notices, as like as not,
  The bare spots where the youngsters play.

I watch this proud and gorgeous bird
  Followed by females drab and plain,
And wonder if they think absurd
  A husband who can be so vain.

Do they such splendid garb admire
  And think him marvelous to see,
Or do they of his boasting tire
  As our wives tire of you and me?

Little Lady Riches

Little Lady Riches, with her groom came riding by,
All dressed up in jodhpurs and a scarf pin in her tie;
She cantered and she galloped up and down the bridle way,
And passed a group of children in the city park at play.
She saw them at a sand pile, and she saw them on a swing,
Without a groom to guard them as they jumped from ring to ring.

Little Lady Riches had a horse to ride about.
But grooms are sullen company, they seldom laugh or shout.
And every time she passed them in the city park at play
She gazed upon the children till she'd ridden far away.
And men, like me, who watched her from the benches where we sat,
Were certain that she wanted just one day as blithe as that.

The groom was under orders, so he galloped her along,
Pretending that her fancy for such pleasures must be wrong.

Of course, the man knew better, but a groom to
earn his pay
Must always do precisely as his wealthy patrons say.
And Little Lady Riches had to canter mile on mile,
When it was plain she wanted to make mud pies
for awhile.

She thought it must be lovely to be free to romp and
play
And to have no groom to guard her every minute
of the day.
She was wearing pretty jodhpurs, but beneath her
riding dress
Was the self-same urge to frolic which all little ones
possess.
As she gazed upon those children we could almost
hear her sigh—
But the groom was under orders and he made her
gallop by.

Hello, Tulips

Hello, tulips, don't you know
Stocks to-day are very low?
You appear so bright and glad,
Don't you know that trade is bad?
You are just as fair to see
As you were in times when we
Rolled in money. Tell me how
You can look so happy now?

Hello, tulips, white and red,
Gleaming in the garden bed,
Can it be you haven't heard
All the grief which has occurred?
Don't you see the saddened eye
Of the human passer-by?
By his frowning, can't you tell
Things have not been going well?

Hello, tulips, in the sun
You are lovely, every one.
But I wonder why don't you
Wear a sad expression, too?
Can it be you fail to see
Things aren't what they used to be?
This old world is all upset,
Why don't you begin to fret?

And they answered me: "Hello.
Nothing's altered that we know,
Warm the sun, and sweet the rain,
Summer skies are blue again,
Birds are singing and we nod
Grateful tulip prayers to God.
Only mortals fret and strive.
We are glad to be alive.

Indebted

The interest on the mortgage on the house is overdue.
The grocer's writing letters threatening us that he will sue.
The plumber wants his money for a washer for a tap.
The Damsel Shoppe is dunning us for sister's evening wrap,
But the thing that worries mother till her face is wreathed in frowns,
Is the fact that we're indebted for a dinner to the Browns.

We haven't paid the doctor since the market went to smash.
The man who runs the laundry writes to say he needs some cash.
I owe the tailor something and I hate to catch his eye;
I always look the other way until he's traveled by;
But the thing that worries mother isn't money that she lacks,
But the fact that we're indebted for a dinner to the Blacks.

It is not for me to quarrel with the women and their ways;

They've a certain code of honor and from it no one strays.
Men may think their worries greater, but the social laws are stern,
And the dinner you've accepted is the meal you must return.
So I sympathize with mother as she lies awake o' nights,
Since for weeks we've been indebted for a dinner to the Whites.

The Little Country Drug Store

Liniments for horses,
  Medicines for cows;
Oils to rub on women folk
  To soothe their aching brows.
Little country drug store,
  Not like those in town,
Where is heard the rustle
  Of many a silken gown.

Remedies in bottles
  For bruises, hurts and sprains,
Panaceas commended
  For human aches and pains.
Tonics for the poultry
  When hens refuse to lay
Put out where city druggists
  Have perfumes on display.

Cures for every ailment
  To which the flesh is heir;
For mothers in the country
  Have little time to spare.
And so the village drug store
  A hundred needs supplies,
Including soothing syrups
  Whene'er the baby cries.

The city drug store glistens
With countless pretty things,
And all the trifling trinkets
Which love of beauty brings,
But still the country drug store
By every inch of space
Proclaims the cares and problems
The wives of farmers face.

What Makes the Game

"I fumbled," said the sad-eyed lad,
"And lost the golden chance I had!"
"That's quite all right," his coach replied,
"I understand how hard you tried.
Forget it now! Go back and fight
With all your strength and all your might.

"Take hold of this consoling thought:
If every ball that's thrown were caught;
If no one faltered; no one fell;
If every play we tried went well;
If gain with every venture came,
There would be nothing to the game.

"What makes the game? Not perfect play,
But golden chances thrown away!
The fumbled ball; the slight mistake
Which men however skillful make,
The faulty judgment and the will
To wait and work for victory still.

"And so with life! If all were plain:
If men perfection could attain,
If neither doubt nor loss nor fear
Should ever test our courage here;
If we knew all, and all could see,
Then deadly dull this life would be."

The Everlasting Flowers

The everlasting flower is grown
In many a garden. Springtime sown
It blossoms in the early fall
And has no fear of death at all.

Its pink and yellow petals feel
Like highly lacquered flakes of steel
Which, if you run your finger round,
Produce a strange metallic sound.

These everlasting flowers defy
The death that other blossoms die.
Stuck in an urn the winter through
They hold their shape and color, too.

They gather dust like statues old
And rattle when the wind blows cold,
Till tired of seeing them about
At last the housewife throws them out.

True charms are delicately made.
The loveliest blossoms soonest fade;
We pass blooms everlasting by
To cherish those we know must die.

Trophies

There's a moose head in the hall,
And a dead fish on the wall,
And a stuffed owl on the mantelpiece,
And birds in a shining case.
There's an antlered deer upstairs,
And a mounted fox which shares
With a partridge prone at its wily feet
A nice mahogany base.

There's a maid each morn who must
Go round the rooms to dust,
And day by day on her weary face
There is ever a dismal scowl,
And this is the song she sings:
"Dead deers are dreadful things!
And I hate fish on a shining board
And the wings of a mounted owl!

"Oh, if ever a man I wed,
May he care for books instead
Of moose and mountain goats and deer
And ducks in a glassy dome;
May his hobby be postage stamps
Instead of the Northern camps,
For I've had my fill of dusting things
Which a hunting man brings home."

The Friend

It matters not to me how rich or poor he be,
Or where he kneels to worship, or the task he does each day,
Or be he black or white, if he will set me right,
And tell me just which road to turn when I have lost my way.

When wandering alone, o'er paths to me unknown,
Bewildered at the crossroads, I have little left of pride;
The humblest man can be most welcome company.
No sneers have I for him who comes to play the friendly guide.

The roads of life are strange, I know not where they range;
Perplexed am I and fearful oft that I have gone astray,
And friend is he, indeed, in spite of place or creed
Who finds me lost and far from home and shows to me the way.

Gift from Heaven

(A husband is a gift from Heaven to woman, says a prominent sociologist.—*News item.*)

Does your gift from Heaven give you all the money
that you need?
Does he bring men home for dinner when but two
you'd planned to feed?
Does your gift from Heaven always do exactly as
he should?
Does he hang up his pajamas or just leave them
where he stood?
As a husband have you thought him in his manners
rather slack?
Well, he's now your gift from Heaven! Would you
like to send him back?

Does your gift from Heaven, lady, stay out rather
late at night?
Does he grumble in the morning if the coffee isn't
right?
Does he whistle while he's shaving? Does he toss
his things about?
When you make a bid at contract does he always
take you out?
Does he frequently annoy you by the silly things
he'll do?
Then remember, little lady, he was Heaven's gift
to you.

A scientist has told us that he thoroughly believes
A husband is a present which from Heaven the wife receives,
And I know the men will hail him as a friend, but I shall fear
To quote my Heavenly rating for I know she'll say, "My dear,
You may be a gift from somewhere, but you can't be Heaven sent,
The professor's made an error—'twas the other place he meant."

Rabbits

Janet has a pair of rabbits just as white as winter's
snow
Which she begged of me to purchase just a week
or two ago,
She found the man who raised them and she took
me over there
To show me all his bunnies, at a dollar for a pair,
And she pleaded to possess them, so I looked at her
and said:
"Will you promise every morning to make sure that
they are fed?"

She promised she would love them and she prom-
ised she would see
They had lettuce leaves to nibble and were cared
for tenderly.
And she looked at me astounded when I said: "I
should regret
Buying pretty bunnies for you if to feed them you'd
forget.
Once there was a little fellow, just about as old as
you,
Who forgot to feed the rabbits which he'd owned
a week or two."

"He forgot to feed his rabbits!" said my Janet in
dismay.
"Yes," I said, "as I remember, he'd go scampering
off to play.

And his mother or his daddy later on would go to see
If his pretty little bunnies had been cared for properly,
And they'd shake their heads in sorrow and remark it seems too bad,
That rabbits should belong to such a thoughtless little lad."

"Who was the boy?" she asked me, and the truth to her I told,
"A little boy you've never seen who now is gray and old,
Some folks say you're just like him," but she looked at me and said:
"I won't forget my bunnies! I'll make sure that they are fed!"
And she bravely kept her promise for about a week or two,
But to-day I fed the rabbits, as I knew I'd have to do.

Apple Tree

Of all the trees, it seems to me,
The friendliest is the apple tree.

Its laden boughs in early fall
Offer its treasures to us all.

Beside the road it seems to wait
Much like an old man at his gate.

Who nods and smiles as men appear
And always has a word of cheer.

Reach up and take the red fruit there,
It acts as though it doesn't care.

If praise men speak, it seems to be
Delighted with their company.

If small boys come, with stone and stick
To storm the branches, fruited thick,

I'll swear its ways as gracious are
As grandma's at her cookie jar,

And that an apple tree enjoys
Such visits from the girls and boys.

Some trees there are which seem to frown
And live aloof with their renown,

But apple trees appear to me
The friendliest of all to be.

A Father's Job

I may not be as clever as my neighbor down the street;
I may never be as wealthy as some other men I meet;
I may never have the glory that some other men have had;
But I've got to be successful as this little fellow's Dad.

There are certain dreams I cherish that I'd like to see come true,
There are things I would accomplish ere my working time is through;
But the task my heart is set on is to guide a little lad,
And to make myself successful as this little fellow's Dad.

I may never come to glory; I may never gather gold;
Men may count me as a failure when my business life is told.
But if he who follows after shall be manly, I'll be glad,
For I'll know I've been successful as this little fellow's Dad.

It's the one job that I dream of; it's the task I think
of most;
If I'd fail that growing youngster, I'd have nothing
else to boast;
For though wealth and fame I'd gather, all my fu-
ture would be sad,
If I failed to be successful as this little fellow's
Dad.

The Old and the New Way

Time was when a maiden had promised to wed
And the question was settled, she blushingly said:
"Before we can say when the wedding will be,
Remember, my darling, there's father to see!"
And so the next evening a stammering lad
Went in to encounter a frozen-faced dad.

The father pretended he knew not at all
Why the nervous young fellow had dropped in to call.
He sat there and eyed him from head down to toe,
And waited the speech which somehow wouldn't flow.
He took off his glasses and grunted this: "Well!
Young man, have you come here with something to sell?"

They had painted the father as someone to fear.
With tales of his temper they'd poisoned his ear.
Both mother and daughter had hinted of him
That he was an ogre, ferocious and grim,
Till it took all the courage a young fellow had
To walk in and get the consent of her dad.

To-day things are different. Each love-making lad
Who enters the house scares the life out of dad.

He knows if he raises his voice to demur
An elopement is something that's apt to occur,
And he knows against marriage 'tis vain to protest,
So he bows in submission and hopes for the best.

Warning to Children

Little children, don't you know
In the street you mustn't go
Rushing after hoop or ball?
If you hear your playmates call,
Look you south and look you north
Ere you dare to venture forth;
Every street is now a place
Where the careless grown-ups race.

Little children say this o'er:
"We must stop and look before
We attempt to cross the street
Lest disaster we shall meet.
It's our duty to prevent
Tragedy and accident.
Vigilance we mustn't drop.
Grown-ups haven't time to stop."

Grown-ups in their motor cars
Smoking pipes and big cigars,
Lighting cigarettes, cannot
Think about some tiny tot
Who may dash into the street
Carelessly on flying feet.
They've no time for taking care
So the children must beware!

Children once again repeat:
"There is danger in the street.
Watch the corners! Grown-ups wise
Swing round them and shut their eyes.
Safety people wise discuss
But they leave it all to us.
Watch the streets and stay alive,
That is where the grown-ups drive!"

Weariness

God set him in a garden fair
  Where tulips bloomed each spring;
About him always everywhere
  Was many a lovely thing,
With miracle and mystery
  His every day was filled,
And yet he only seemed to see
  The structures mortals build.

He knew the stars were overhead,
  But seldom raised his eyes,
The paths of life he chose to tread,
  A stranger to the skies.
From youth to manhood, then to age,
  He plunged his spirit deep
In figures on the ledger page,
  Correct accountants keep.

He never learned the names of flowers,
  Or birds or friendly trees,
In all his busy wakeful hours
  He never heard the breeze
Enticing him with bits of song
  To let a day go by
To watch a brooklet race along
  Or gaze upon the sky.

God set him in a garden fair
With countless splendors strewn,
But all he saw while walking there
Was stone some man had hewn,
And all he talked was loss and gain
And cold commercial strife—
Which makes it easy to explain
How tired he grew of life.

Prisoner at the Bar

And the judge said: "What! no money to pay
In your hour of need
A lawyer to plead
Your case to-day?
And you come to the bar
Just as you are,
Poor and alone, with no friend to nudge
The solemn sides of the powerful judge
And ask as a personal favor that you
Be spared the punishment justly due?
Well, be not afraid!
Let your case be laid
Here before me. Though poor you are
And alone you must stand at the judgment bar
With the best and the worst of you known, my son,
I'll forgive you most of the wrong you've done."

If these lines you've read
You may think them odd,
But the man was dead
And the judge was God.

The Plain Road

Let my road be the plain road,
The simple and the sane road,
The road where friendly men abide,
Dividing joys and woes.
I want to fare the main road,
The pleasure and the pain road,
The road that winds through all the cares
Which everybody knows.

I would not take the high road,
The boastful "this is my road,"
The road which seems to run away
From other people's care;
I would not tread the blind road,
The selfish "never mind" road
Which leads to cold forgetfulness
Of pain that others bear.

I want to walk the long road,
"The understanding wrong" road,
The road where flowers of pity bloom
And pomp is seldom seen.
I want to walk the true road,
The common dare and do road,
Where men forgive the faults they find
And hearts are seldom mean.

Neighboring

I remember when a boy that my mother used to say:
"Mind the house a little while, for I won't be long
away.
I'm just going 'cross the street for perhaps an hour
or two;
Mrs. Smith is very ill and I'll see what I can do."
None of us had money then, so when trouble came
about,
Neighbors up and down the street had to help each
other out.

I have watched her many a time stirring custard or
a cake
For the dainty bit of food which some invalid could
take.
And when sickness came to us so the neighbors ral-
lied 'round;
For the burdens we must bear many a helping hand
we found.
But our fortunes rose and rose and we ceased to
play the friend,
And we ceased to look for help, having money we
could spend.

When whatever people wish they possess the coin
to buy
There is very little left for the neighbors to supply.

When for hospital attention there is money in the purse,
Kindly women on the street one another needn't nurse.
Thus with wealth at every hand and with rising bonds and shares
We raced blindly on our way, each about his own affairs.

But we're back to simpler ways, and the mothers more and more
Will go slipping 'cross the street to some troubled neighbor's door.
And they'll help to nurse the sick and they'll stir up custards, too,
In the same unselfish way that our mothers used to do.
Oh, we've had our fling at wealth, now we're back to living plain,
Back to all that friendship means, back to neighboring again.

Mice, Absolutely Free!

"Want a pair of mice," says Janet, "in a week or two?
Build a cage and I will give two of mine to you.
Got to ask your mother first? I can tell you now
Mice are something parents absolutely won't allow!

"Here's the way to do it. I have many a mouse to spare.
Come and look at them to-day and pick yourself a pair.
They're all furred out and ready. Yes, they're at the proper age.
So go and get some grown-up man you know to build a cage.

"But don't you tell your mother, and don't you tell your dad
And don't you sit around and say that mice you wish you had,
For though they're just as pretty and as cute as they can be
It seems white mice are something every grown-up hates to see.

"If you ask them may you have them, 'No!' is what they're sure to say;

But if you take them home with you perhaps they'll
let them stay.
That's how I had to do it. Now my cage is full of
mice
And I wish you'd take a couple, for you'll find them
very nice."

Self-Importance

The man was very serious and pompous and imperious,
A most important citizen beyond the slightest doubt;
For grown-ups always bowed to him, and flatterers kow-towed to him
While seekers after favors used to follow him about.

One day the wind his hat blew off and with it down the street flew off.
It bowled it over curb and track, as if it didn't know,
Or knowing didn't care at all that great men cannot bear at all
To have their shining hats removed by all the winds that blow.

But even more disturbing was the fact that on the curbing was
A little boy of seven or eight who dared to laugh aloud.
A little chap supremely bright, who thought it was a funny sight
To see a hat being chased by one so very stiff and proud.

Big man, remember any day the wind can blow your
hat away
And set you running after it, as commoners must
do;
And though in deference to your pride, their mirth
the grown-up flatterers hide,
Not caring who or what you are a child will
laugh at you.

Eclipse

A man—in hand a bit of glass—
  Calls: "Neighbors, run!
Come quickly! See the cold moon pass
  'Twixt earth and sun.

"Behold the shadow as it spins
  Along the way.
How strangely evening time begins
  At middle day."

One says he thinks eclipses show
  That men are wise,
Who have contrived so much to know
  About the skies.

Another glances once or twice
  And then no more,
Saying: "Eclipses may be nice,
  But me they bore!"

"Here is a work that baffles men!"
  Another cries.
"No, thanks! I will not look again.
  It hurts my eyes!"

St. Valentine

The wise Charles Lamb once penned a line
Of praise to Bishop Valentine.
"In all the calendar," said he,
"No mitred father's like to thee!
Thy choristers from near and far
The happy, singing Cupids are!

"This day which has been christened thine
Has given us the valentine,
By which the lover in his daze
Sends forth some sweet and pretty phrase,
Engraved on arrowed heart or bell,
The ardor of his love to tell."

Old Bishop Valentine, you chose
A diocese which larger grows.
No loss, nor hurt, nor troubled day
Drive your parishioners away.
Whatever shocks at men are hurled,
Love will contrive to run the world.

The Apple Vendor

The apple man upon the corner worries me a lot.
I wonder if he sells enough to pay his rent or not;
I wonder if he lives alone, or has he children small,
And just how many apples he must sell to feed
them all.

It's no concern of mine, of course; I've never
learned his name,
I don't know where he goes to, nor from whence
the fellow came,
And yet I never see him on the corner with his box
But I wonder how he stands it in those worn-out
shoes and socks.

I wonder as I pass him what misfortune cut him
down
And left him selling apples on some corner of the
town;
And if his wife is grateful for the little that he
gives,
And what he does on Sunday and just where it is
he lives.

I wonder who his friends are, and is he what he
seems,

Or a man of high ambitions in the wreckage of his dreams?

And has he wasted chances or done everything he could?

And a thousand other questions which I wish I understood.

Wedding Plans

It's all planned and settled. They'll be married very soon.
I think that Ma's decided on an early day in June,
And I chuckle as I watch her in her most efficient way
Already giving orders for that coming wedding day;
At the slightest provocation into action mother springs
And it's plain to everybody that she's taken hold of things!

When I whisper: "Ma, remember, you have had your wedding day
And perhaps these happy youngsters feel they'd like a word to say,"
She replies: "I'm only helping with my counsel and advice.
Only just a little anxious to have everything that's nice;
And they're both so young and loving—they prefer to bill and coo
While I plan their wedding for them—it's a job I like to do!"

Well, I'm sitting by and watching, and I chuckle to myself
As Ma tells what pots and skillets shall fill up the pantry shelf,

And I chuckle as she tells them just what furniture
to buy
Or just what extra pieces friends and kinsfolk may
supply.
When that little home is finished it will be the
dwelling grand
Which the bride's devoted mother has for ages
dreamed and planned.

And the more I think about it all the more I'm
moved to say
That a mother's best adventure is her daughter's
wedding day.
From the coming of the baby, through the journey
of the years
She is planning for that moment when the groom-
to-be appears.
And the minute things are settled, till the hour the
church bell rings,
It's a mother's blessed privilege to take command
of things.

The Dog

I've never known a dog to wag
His tail in glee he did not feel,
Nor quit an old-time friend to tag
At some more influential heel.
The yellowest cur I ever knew
Was to the boy who loved him true.

I've never known a dog to show
Half-way devotion to his friend;
To seek a kinder man to know,
Or richer, but unto the end,
The humblest dog I ever knew
Was to the man who loved him true.

I've never known a dog to take
Affection for a present gain,
A false display of love to make
Some little favor to attain.
I've never known a Prince or Spot
That seemed to be what he was not.

But I have known a dog to fight
With all his strength to aid a friend,
And whether wrong or whether right,
To stick with him until the end.
And I have known a dog to lick
The hand of him whom men would kick.

And I have known a dog to bear
Starvation pangs from day to day,
With him who had been glad to share
His bread and meat along the way.
No dog, however mean or rude,
Is guilty of ingratitude.

The dog is listed with the dumb,
No voice has he to speak his creed,
His messages to humans come
By faithful conduct and by deed.
He shows, as seldom mortals do,
A high ideal of being true.

The Farm Hand

I watched him in the blazing field,
Harrowing for September's yield,
A rugged lad in denim jeans
A subject fit for pastoral scenes,
Which would have caught the eager eye
Of any artist passing by.

No mercy showed the blazing sun.
I watched the heat waves roll and run
Across the land, baked hard and brown,
And wondered if fine folks in town,
Who smile above their evening's bread,
Have any notion how they're fed.

So white and delicate and fair
It comes to table everywhere
That only farming people know
What suffering brings the wheat to grow,
And only country boys can tell
The toil that makes the soil do well.

Next winter when I sit to dine
Where silverware and glasses shine
And bread is passed, in fancy I
Will see, beneath a cloudless sky,
That boy enduring cruel heat
All day within a field of wheat.

Gladiolas

Call them gladiolas! That's how mother knew them!
Never mind the Latin name—it's not half as pretty.
Gladiolas! Everybody in the country grew them
Thinking they were just the same to people in the city.

Came an aunt to visit us one summer time and she
Had a lot of wisdom and took every chance to share it;
Tried to teach us children how to say: "gladioli!"
Mother wouldn't learn it 'cause she simply couldn't bear it.

Call them gladiolas! That is what they'll always be
To folks who really love 'em and whose natures never harden;
People who remember to pronounce "gladioli"
Maybe aren't familiar with the friendships of a garden.

Two Sentimentalists

He was a sentimental man. He'd often shed a tear
When someone came and poured a tale of sorrow in his ear
And wiping dry his misty eyes he'd say: "I wish I knew
A way to end your misery, but nothing can I do."

His neighbor was a hardened case and gruff as gruff could be,
He never shed a misty tear where anyone could see.
He mocked and jibed at sentiment and sneered at people good
But if a poor man needed them he'd send him coal and wood.

The sentimental man disliked to look on scenes of woe.
He'd talk of wrongs men ought to right, but never strike a blow.
The rough and tough old customer who lacked the art of speech
Befriended every weaker man who stepped within his reach.

I do not think I'm fit to judge man's conduct on this earth.

I know it's very difficult to value human worth.
I merely note this difference, 'twixt two men, wide
apart,
The one had pity on his lips—the other in his heart.

The Wayward

Sometimes into the finest group there slips
  The plunderer and the cheat
Who, with a sullen look upon his lips,
  Mocks good men he may meet.

And those who well their high employments bear
  Are sick with hurt and shame,
That one who has no thought for them must share
  Their calling and their fame.

High-minded men forever here must face
  With shame's hot burning cheek
The deeds of those who find with them a place—
  The traitorous and the weak.

To every family come the ones who fail—
  The strange, black sheep—
And only God knows why they are so frail
  And how their fellows weep!

Victim of Fear

He feared so much the growing old
  And poverty's grim curse
That he refused to let the gold
  Escape his tight-locked purse
And let his youth turn gray with mould—
  A tragedy much worse!

He robbed his middle-age of all
  That makes a lifetime sweet
And walked, with fortune at his call,
  A poor man down the street,
Fearing that when the shadows fall
  Such poverty he'd meet.

In giving he found no delight.
  With fortune at his side
He thought with failing strength and sight
  He'd need what coins provide.
He lived a poor life that he might
  Be rich the day he died.

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

PAGE

A linen man from Syria has pretty wares to sell. 111
All the house is sad to-day 128
A man—in hand a bit of glass— 173
And if the fight I lose, what then? 43
And one man said 19
And the judges said: "What! no money to pay. 165
A shelter for the children and a place for them to play 51
As I was walking down the road 37
As I went walking down the way I met a pretty miss 57
A thing of tubes and wires, and lo 132

Because he lived, next door a child 44

Call them gladiolas! That's how mother knew them! 182
Comes Summer to the world its work to do 65
Customs change and nations fall 82

Does your gift from Heaven give you all the money that you need? 151

God set him in a garden fair 163

He builded his happiness out of these 137
He feared so much the growing old 186
He is never in a bunker, and he's never in the rough 55
Hello, tulips, don't you know 141

PAGE

He never had a problem, and he never had a care— 79
He was a sentimental man. He'd often shed a tear 183
He went his way and never knew..... 17

I came across 'em, by the stair..... 41
I could not be a fashion plate..... 93
If I were Santa Claus this year..... 32
"I fumbled," said the sad-eyed lad..... 147
If your purse no longer bulges and you've lost your golden treasure..... 47
I know a surgeon calm and wise..... 76
I know no greater joys than these..... 33
I like to tiptoe round her when she's lying fast asleep 115
I'll see it through, whate'er the danger be..... 28
I may not be as clever as my neighbor down the street 157
I notice when they're playing house, Miss Janet wants to be 77
I remember when a boy that my mother used to say 167
I saw the blue smoke rising from a little chimney stack 119
I sing of the old-fashioned carver who gracefully wielded his blade..... 85
I think perhaps we'll never know..... 27
It is difficult to read..... 89
It matters not to me how rich or poor he be... 150
It's all planned and settled. They'll be married very soon 177
It's the business of an uncle, which I've frequently expressed 121
It was difficult to work with; it was stubborn yellow clay 123

PAGE

I've never known a dog to wag.....179
I watched him in the blazing field.....181

Janet has a pair of rabbits just as white as winter's snow 153
Joseph of Arimathea had lived out his long career 71
Just a little baby..... 97
Just an ordinary man, eight and forty to the day 42

Leave it to the ministers, and soon the church will die 91
Let him who will go running for the lights that gleam afar 117
Let my road be the plain road.....166
Liniments for horses 145
Little children, don't you know.....161
Little children ought to be.....107
Little Lady Riches, with her groom came riding by 139
Lord, for the day 'tis these I ask..... 70
Lord, grant our little family..... 31
Lord, now the prodigal son returns..... 45

Making the best of it! What do you mean.... 74

November days are chill and cold..... 60

Of all the trees, it seems to me.....155
Oh, never comes the circus with its wonders into town 129
Oh, there are clocks of various kinds.....125
Old-fashioned Zinnias seem to me..... 39
Our nine-year-old who went to bed..... 49
Out in the sandy desert where never a cloud is seen 56

PAGE

Out of a jutting rock, wind blown..... 38

Privations grim were his to bear..... 46

Sometimes a pheasant comes to call.....138
Sometimes into the finest group there slips.....185
Sometimes when I don't play..... 95
Strengthen us, Lord, that we may hold..... 40
Supper's ready! There's the call..... 73

Take life as you find it..... 34
That Colorado spruce you see..... 21
The apple man upon the corner worries me a lot 175
The backbone of the nation is the happy-hearted throng 67
The busy world has time and space.....108
The everlasting flower is grown.....148
The falling leaves seem pitiful to see..... 83
The fathers and the mothers on a certain happy day 61
The great god Fear grinned back at me..... 88
The interest on the mortgage on the house is overdue 143
The landlord wouldn't paint the place..... 98
The little garden plot I tread..... 59
The little lady old and gray..... 75
The love of beauty once possessed..... 87
The man had little at all to say.....130
The man was very serious and pompous and imperious 171
The Martins are peculiar and whimsical at best.101
The patient man who stands to care.....113
The proof of the pudding's the eating, they say. 23
There's a moose head in the hall.....149

PAGE

There was a grumbling soldier who growled the whole year long..... 99
There was a lonely woman in a cottage. Day by day 105
The wise Charles Lamb once penned a line...174
The wise optician smiled and said.....103
The youth who had the ball..... 29
They're planning to get married, and I'm rather glad they are..... 63
They stood in line and shivered and the man in the middle said 50
This is courage: to remain..... 36
This is wisdom, maids and men.....114
Throughout the years that we've been wed.... 69
Time was when a maiden had promised to wed.159
Time was with pride I used to say..... 35
'Tis good to walk life's highway wide..... 15
To prove their wisdom and their strength..... 20
'Twas little that I knew of pain..... 53

Upon the hills the giant trees with color were ablaze 133

"Want a pair of mice," says Janet, "in a week or two?" 169
We fancied he'd share in our cause. Instead... 81
We went together, just as though.....135
"What did you do?" asked the Lord, and the traveling tinsmith said 127
What do you do when a young fellow comes..131
When a little baby comes..... 66
When bill collectors call on me.....109
When I was but a little lad, not more than eight or nine 96
Who knows what lies behind us all..... 25
Why they never understood..... 84